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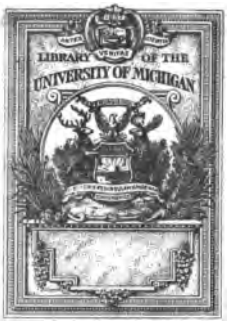

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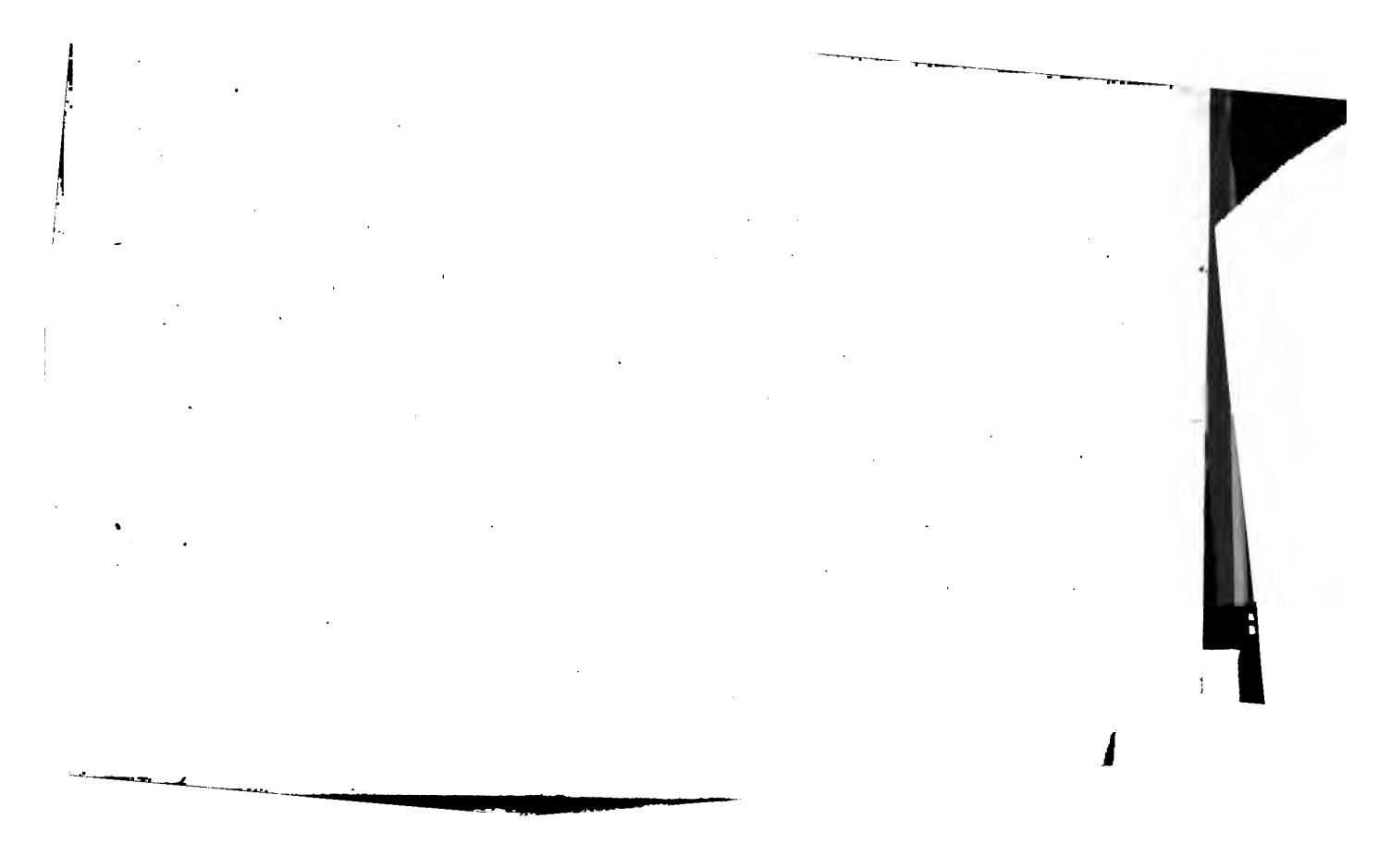

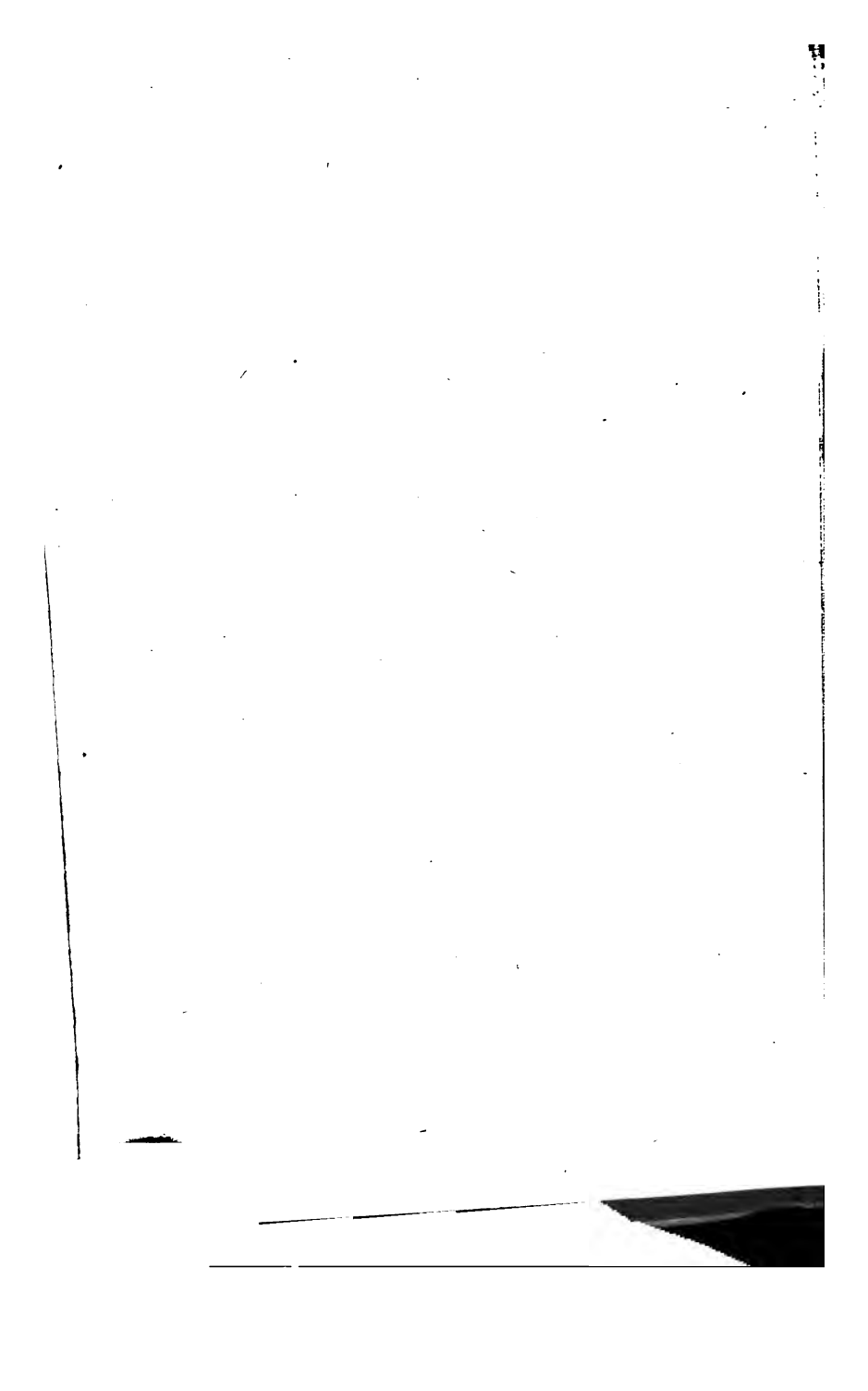

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GRAY'S POEMS

EDITED WITH

INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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London
MACMILLAN AND CO.
AND NEW YORK
1891

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following passages are not in all as left us by Gray—the *Elegy*, 2, 35, 77, 93, 94, 123; *Hymn to Adversity*, 36, 44; the *Bard*, 16, 49, 100; *Progress of Poesy*, 8, 29; *Long Story*, 2; and in my Notes on the *Ode at the Installation* I have noted a curious error into which all editors subsequent to Mason have fallen, with the exception of Mathias.

For the remaining poems in this Selection I have referred to the original editions of 1753, 1769, and to the MSS. in the British Museum.

I desire to express my thanks to Mr. Gosse for his courtesy and the readiness with which he placed at my disposal the result of his labours in the study of Gray, and discoveries made subsequent to the publication of his biography and 'Works' of the poet; to the Rev. D. C. Tovey, author of *Gray and his Friends*, for information on several points which his scholarship and accuracy have enabled me to produce correctly for the first time; to Mr. Leslie Stephen for help in a biographical difficulty; to the Rev. Dr. Warre for obliging attention and favouring me with particulars on matters relating to Gray's connection with Eton; to the Rev. H. Arnott and to the Rev. R. F. Rumsey for comparing with the printed copies the epitaphs by Gray in the church at Beckenham and at Burnham; to the Rev. W. A. Mathews for a copy of the epitaph in Appleby Church parodied by Gray; and to the Rev. Vernon Blake for information regarding the church, etc., at Stoke Poges.

J. B.

SANDOWN, ISLE OF WIGHT,
9th May, 1891.

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Further, the poetry of Gray and all we have of him we owe to his mother's side of the house. She herself belonged to Buckinghamshire; her brothers, Robert and William Antrobus, were assistant masters at Eton, therefore Gray was sent to Eton and educated under the direction of his uncle Robert. A sister of hers was married to Jonathan Rogers, a lawyer residing at Burnham, and subsequently at Stoke-Poges, or Stoke, not far from Windsor, and now famous the world over for the church-yard of the *Elegy;* and from his house at Burnham Gray described the now celebrated beeches, and at it met Southern, the author of *Oroonoko,* in September 1737.

At Eton, which Gray entered in 1727, he formed a friendship with two school-fellows, Horace Walpole, son of the Prime Minister, and Richard West, son of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, and grandson of the famous Bishop Burnet. Associated with the names of West and Walpole are several of Gray's poetical compositions and many of his most interesting letters. Other school friends, with whom his subsequent career was connected, were Thomas Ashton, George Montagu, Stonehewer, Clarke, and Jacob Bryant.

In 1734 Gray entered Pembroke Hall, Cambridge; and on the 3rd of July of that year was admitted to Peterhouse, the college of which his uncle Robert had been a Fellow. Walpole entered King's College, Cambridge, in March, 1735; and about the same time West matriculated in Christ Church, Oxford.

At Eton, according to Horace Walpole,* Gray's uncle "took prodigious pains with him, which answered

* In a memorandum prefixed to Mitford's *Correspondence of Gray and Mason.*

accordingly"; and there has been recently published, in Mr. Gosse's edition of Gray's Works, a Latin exercise of his while at school, which shows not only the early ripeness of his scholarship, but the same moralizing vein that characterizes the *Odes* and *Elegy*. At Cambridge he was studious and retiring; his compositions that have come down to us being a few Latin pieces—one a Hymeneal on the marriage of the Prince of Wales in 1736, and *Luna Habitabilis*, a College exercise set in 1737, and printed in *Musæ Etonenses;* and a translation in English verse of about one hundred lines of the *Thebaid* of Statius, which he sent to West in May, 1736, and another of a passage of Tasso, in December, 1738.

Gray's life at Cambridge and the studies prescribed by the College were most distasteful to him; mathematics were not his forte, and his fellow-students were not congenial. Writing to West in December, 1736, he tells him that he had endured lectures daily and hourly supported by the hopes of being able to give himself up to his friends and classical companions. "It is very possible," he writes, "that two and two make four, but I would not give four farthings to demonstrate this ever so clearly; and if these be the profits of life, give me the amusements of it. The people I behold all around me, it seems, know all this and more, and yet I do not know one of them who inspires me with any ambition of being like him." In his other letters from Cambridge we see the melancholy—the melancholy of *Il Penseroso*—so characteristic of his poetry; the humour, as when he writes to West "you need not doubt of having a first row in the front box of my little heart," which reappears in the *Long Story*, and some satirical pieces, and is every-

where conspicuous in his correspondence; and the love and admiration of Nature,—his letter from Burnham being aptly described as the 'first expression of the modern feeling of the picturesque,'—so fully developed in his after-life, which led Sir James Mackintosh to observe, "I am struck by the recollection of a sort of merit in Gray, which is not generally observed, that he was the first discoverer of the beauties of Nature in England, and has marked out the course of every picturesque journey that can be made in it."

In September, 1738, Gray left College, and shortly after Horace Walpole invited him to accompany him on a tour through the Continent, Walpole bearing the expenses of both. This being agreed to, the two friends started from Dover on the 29th March, 1739. Gray remained abroad for nearly three years, and saw most of the cities of Southern Europe; his having made this continental tour forming one of many points of resemblance between him and Milton, who, just a hundred years previously, had seen many of the spots and sights now visited by Gray. Gray and Walpole spent two months at Paris, the summer at Rheims, and thence proceeded to Dijon and Lyons, and, travelling through Savoy, visited the Grande Chartreuse on their way to Geneva. In November they arrived at Turin, and after short halts at Genoa, Parma, and Bologna, they reached Florence, where they were the guests of Horace Mann, and this was their headquarters for the next fifteen months. The April and May of 1740 were spent at Rome; in June he was at Naples; and the winter of 1740-41 at Florence. In the end of April, 1741, at Reggio, the friends had a difference which ended in their parting company, Gray

Letters the best that could be written, but I like Gray's better. His humour, or his wit, or whatever it may be called, is never ill-natured or offensive, and yet I think equally poignant with the Dean's." Of the letters from the Continent that have come down to us, thirteen are to his mother, eleven to West, and five to his father.

Two months after Gray's return to England his father died, on the 6th November, 1741. The winter he spent in London, and the summer of 1742 at Stoke; to this place his mother and aunt retired, joining their sister there on the death of Mr. Rogers, in October, 1742; and there they resided till their death, Gray frequently paying them long visits.

In December, 1741, Gray commenced his first original composition in English poetry—*Agrippina*, a tragedy in blank verse; but of this he wrote only a single scene, consisting of a long speech by Agrippina; this he sent to West for his opinion in March, 1742, and partly because he condemned the style as too antiquated, Gray put it aside and never resumed it.

The year 1742 is an era in Gray's life as a poet; in the summer of that year he wrote at Stoke-Poges his *Ode on the Spring*, *On a Distant Prospect of Eton College*, *Sonnet on the Death of West*, and *Hymn to Adversity*, and in the autumn commenced the *Elegy*. His *Ode on the Spring* he sent early in June to West, but it was returned, as he had died on the first of that month. His death, immediately following that of his uncle William Antrobus, greatly affected Gray; he lamented West in a sonnet—the first of any value that had been written since those of Milton—and in the *Ode on Eton*, written in the same month, his recent losses caused him to take too gloomy a

its mood. In short, he was a genuine lyrist, and our literature had possessed none since Milton and the last cavalier song writers." Of the *Ode on Eton* it will be sufficient to note here that this short poem contains several phrases which have passed into household words and become part and parcel of our daily speech. Of the *Hymn to Adversity* the critic already quoted observes that it is "remarkable as the first of Gray's poems in which he shows the stateliness of movement and pomp of allegorical illustration which give an individuality to his maturer style. No English poet, except perhaps Milton and Shelley, has maintained the same severe elevation throughout a long lyrical piece; perhaps the fragments of such lyrists as Simonides gave Gray the hint of this pure and cold manner of writing."

In the winter of 1742 Gray went into residence at Peterhouse College, graduating as LL.B. in 1744;* and for the rest of his life he made Cambridge his home, with occasional visits to Stoke, to London, and to friends in the country. The next four or five years Gray devoted to reading; his chief study being the literature of ancient Greece, and, in particular, Aristophanes, Strabo, Plato, Aristotle, and the Greek Anthology.

An event of importance to us as well as to Gray was his reconciliation, in November, 1745,† with Horace Walpole, as the latter not only induced Gray to let his poems appear in print, but actually published the first collected edition of them at his own press at Strawberry Hill. Another interesting incident was an interview between Gray and Pope, which took place probably not long

* *Graduati Cantabrigienses.* Mason and subsequent editors say 1742. † See *Gray and his Friends*, p. 7.

the shore. Of the soldiers on board, how eagerly must every heart have throbbed at the coming conflict! how intently must every eye have contemplated the dark outline, as it lay pencilled upon the midnight sky, and as every moment it grew closer and clearer, of the hostile heights! Not a word was spoken—not a sound heard beyond the rippling of the stream. Wolfe alone—thus tradition has told us—repeated in a low tone to the other officers in his boat those beautiful stanzas with which a country churchyard inspired the muse of Gray. One noble line,

'The paths of glory lead but to the grave,'

must have seemed at such a moment fraught with mournful meaning. At the close of the recitation Wolfe added, 'Now, gentlemen, I would rather be the author of that poem than take Quebec.'"

In the summer of 1750 Gray wrote the humorous verses entitled a *Long Story*,—a mock-heroic or burlesque account of his introduction to Lady Cobham and Miss Speed at the Manor House at Stoke-Poges.

The year 1753 is remarkable in Gray's literary life for the publication of a handsome edition of his poems with illustrations by Richard Bentley. The work was in reality planned by Horace Walpole, who persuaded Gray to allow the poems to be printed, and paid Bentley for his drawings, and supervised the work generally. In Walpole's brief sketch of Gray he thus describes the work: "In March, 1753, was published a fine edition of his poems, with frontispieces, head and tail pieces and initial letters, engraved by Grignion and Müller, after drawings of Richard Bentley Esq." So modest was Gray as to his contribution to the work that instead of

At length repair his vigour lost,
And breathe and walk again;
The meanest flowret of the vale,
The simplest note that swells the gale,
The common sun, the air, the skies,
To him are opening paradise."

In December, 1754, Gray completed and sent to Dr. Wharton an "Ode in the Greek manner," requesting him "by no means to suffer it to be copied, nor even to show it unless to very few." This Ode was what was subsequently known as the *Progress of Poesy*; it and the companion Ode, *The Bard*, are the most original of his productions, and at the same time show his art at its highest.

The *Bard* was commenced early in 1755, and laid aside, nothing apparently being done at it in 1756, but in May, 1757, in a fit of enthusiasm roused by some concerts given at Cambridge by John Parry, the famous blind harper, Gray at length finished it. He thus describes the incident in a letter to Mason:—"Mr. Parry has been here and scratched out such ravishing blind harmony, such tunes of a thousand years old, with names enough to choke you, as have set all this learned body a-dancing, and inspired them with due reverence for my old Bard, his countryman, whenever he shall appear. Parry, you must know, put my Ode in motion again, and has brought it at last to a conclusion."

In August, 1757, the two Pindaric Odes, with the simple title of *Odes by Mr. Gray*, were published as the first issue of a private printing press that Horace Walpole had set up at Strawberry Hilll. The motto Gray adopted, from Pindar, was Φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσι—'vocal to the intelligent.' His reputation as a poet was made at

once, but it was evident that he had judged rightly in assuming that all his readers and critics could not be included among the 'intelligent.' In a letter to Dr. Wharton a couple of months after their publication, Gray wrote:—"Dr. Warburton is come to town, and I am told likes them extremely; he says the world never passed so just an opinion upon anything as upon them; for that in other things they have affected to like or to dislike, whereas here they own they do not understand, which he looks on to be very true; but yet thinks they understand them as well as Milton or Shakspere, whom they are obliged by fashion to admire. Mr. Garrick's complimentary verses to me you have seen; I am told they were printed in the *Chronicle* of last Saturday. The *Critical Review* is in raptures, but mistakes the Æolian lyre for the harp of Æolus, and on this pleasant error founds both a compliment and a criticism." Oliver Goldsmith reviewed the Odes in the *London Monthly Review* for September, and observes of them:—"They will give as much pleasure to those who relish this species of composition as anything that has hitherto appeared in our language, the odes of Dryden himself not excepted." David Garrick's complimentary stanzas were six in number, of which the following two may be quoted as a specimen of the great actor's verse and of his mode of treating the subject:—

"Repine not, Gray, that our weak dazzled eyes
Thy daring heights and brightness shun;
How few can trace the eagle to the skies,
Or, like him, gaze upon the sun! . . .

Yet droop not, Gray, nor quit thy heaven-born art;
Again thy wondrous powers reveal:

Wake slumbering Virtue in the Briton's heart,
And rouse us to reflect and feel!"

Small as the amount of Gray's poetical work had been he was recognized as the greatest living poet, and in December, 1757, on the death of Colley Cibber, he was offered the post of Poet-Laureate. This Gray declined, observing that he hoped that somebody might accept it "that will retrieve the credit of the thing, if it be retrievable or ever had any credit. Dryden was as disgraceful to the office from his character, as the poorest scribbler could have been from his verses. The office itself has always humbled the professor hitherto (even in an age when kings were somebody), if he were a poor writer by making him more conspicuous, and if he were a good one by setting him at war with the little fry of his own profession, for there are poets little enough to envy even a poet-laureate."

In 1759 Gray lived mostly in London, near the British Museum, which had been opened to the public in the January of that year; and here he read for several hours almost daily, and copied MSS. of Wyatt and Lydgate. He continued at this and similar work in the winter of 1760-61, copying out Gawin Douglas' *Palace of Honour*, and composing his *Observations on English Metre*, and other notes for a History of English Poetry he was then planning, which he refers to in the advertisement to his Imitations from the Norse.

In the autumn of 1762 Gray made a tour in Yorkshire and Derby, visiting Richmond, Ripon, Sheffield, and Chatsworth, and other places of interest. His next excursion was a trip to Scotland in August, 1764; from Cumberland he visited Dumfries, the Falls of the Clyde,

Glasgow (where he met Foulis, the publisher), Loch Lomond, Stirling, Hawthornden, Melrose, Edinburgh, and places near it. In October he started on a tour in the south of England, visiting Winchester, Southampton, Netley Abbey, Salisbury, and Stonehenge. His description of these places is most charming reading, his picturesque passages in letters to friends "showing an eye for nature without a precedent in modern literature." In the autumn of 1765 Gray paid a second visit to Scotland, and was the guest of Lord Strathmore on a tour in the Highlands;—"the mountains," he says, "are ecstatic, and ought to be visited in pilgrimage once a year; none but those monstrous creatures of God know how to join so much beauty with so much horror. . . . Italy could hardly produce a nobler scene, and this so sweetly contrasted with that perfection of nastiness and total want of accommodation that Scotland only can supply."

In the summer of 1766 he spent some months in Kent, visiting the whole coast of that county; and here again his descriptions of the scenery are poetry in prose:—"The country is all a garden, gay, rich, and fruitful, and from the rainy season had preserved, till I left it, all that emerald verdure, which commonly one only sees for the first fortnight of the spring. In the west part of it from every eminence the eye catches some long winding reach of the Thames or Medway, with all their navigation; in the east the sea breaks in upon you, and mixes its white transient sails of glittering blue expanse with the deeper and brighter greens of the woods and the corn."

In 1768, Dodsley having asked Gray to allow him to republish his poems, there appeared the first complete edition of the poems he wished to make public. These

numbered only ten,—five of the six that were published in the edition of 1753 (the *Long Story* being now omitted), his two Pindaric Odes and three Odes from the Norse. In this edition he supplied explanatory foot notes, for which he sarcastically apologises in a prefatory note to the *Progress of Poesy* (see p. 74), but in one of his letters with less reserve he states that he added the notes "out of spite because the public did not understand the two Odes which I call Pindaric, though the first is not very dark, and the second alluded to a few common facts to be found in any sixpenny history of England, by way of question and answer for the use of children." At the same time another edition of the same poems was published in Glasgow by Foulis; this was a large and handsome book. In the advertisement to it the publishers state that "as an expression of their high esteem and gratitude, they have endeavoured to print it in the best manner; . . . this is the first work in the Roman character which they have printed with so large a type."

In July, 1768, the Professorship of Modern History at Cambridge fell vacant, and it was at once offered, unsolicited, to Gray by the Duke of Grafton, then Prime Minister. In the same week, Gray attended the King's levee, and kissed hands on his appointment; and in letters to his friends he says the King made him several gracious speeches, and told him that he owed his nomination to his 'particular knowledge' of him. This professorship, which was worth £400 a year, had always been an honorary appointment, as the professor was not required to deliver any lectures.

In the following year, the Duke of Grafton having

been appointed Chancellor of the University, Gray undertook to write the customary Installation Ode, and this was set to music by the Professor of Music and performed at the Installation on the 1st July, 1769. This Ode is on a well-conceived plan, and contains several passages in his best style, such as that beautiful stanza, where," says Hallam, "he has made the founders of Cambridge pass before our eyes like shadows over a magic glass."

In October, 1769, Gray made a tour in the Lake country, visiting Ulleswater, Borrodale, Lodore, Ambleside, Grasmere, Rydal, and other places afterwards to be associated with the Lake poets, and celebrated by Wordsworth and Southey. He wrote a journal of this tour for the amusement of his friend, Dr. Wharton, which was published in Mason's *Memoirs* in 1775 among Gray's Letters to Wharton. The graphic and picturesque narrative of his tour, which was never intended for publication, fully justifies the remark that Gray is the "only amateur that has ever succeeded in winning a place abreast of the great professional writers of the nation." Wordsworth nowhere, so far as I am aware, refers to his having read Gray's Journal, and, if he did not, it renders all the more striking the similarity of language in the two poets. Writing of a walk to Crow Park, Gray's note is :—"At distance heard the murmur of many waterfalls not audible in the day time." This re-appears in the *White Doe* :—

> "A soft and lulling sound is heard
> Of streams inaudible by day."

Gray's wonderful descriptions of the scenery of Ulleswater and Borrodale and of the Lodore waterfall should

be read in Mr. Gosse's edition, vol. i. pp. 251-256, and with them Wordsworth's *Daffodils, Yew Trees,* and the *Evening Walk.*

During his life at Cambridge Gray's most intimate friends were the Rev. Wm. Mason, the Rev. James Brown, Fellow of Pembroke, and Thomas Wharton, M.D., another Fellow, latterly residing in Durham. His correspondence was mainly with these three; the two former he appointed his executors, and he frequently went on visits to Mason at Aston in Yorkshire and at York, and to Wharton in Durham. In 1760 he took a fancy to an undergraduate, Norton Nicholls, and continued to keep up an interesting correspondence with him after he had left College and was a country clergyman in Suffolk. Through him Gray formed another friendship, which seemed serviceable to him in taking him out of himself; this was with a young Swiss gentleman named Bonstetten, who had come over to England to finish his education; Nicholls persuaded him to go to Cambridge and gave him a letter of introduction to Gray. For the first three months of 1769 Bonstetten spent every evening with Gray, reading with him Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Pope, and other English authors. On his way back to Switzerland Bonstetten stopped in London, and was shown some of the sights by Gray, among others Dr. Johnson himself, whom Gray knew by sight but disliked. Bonstetten told Sir Egerton Brydges, among other anecdotes of Gray, that when he was walking one day with Gray in a crowded street of the city, "a large uncouth figure was rolling before them, upon seeing which Gray exclaimed with some bitterness, 'Look, look, Bonstetten, the great bear! There goes Ursa

Major.'" In addition to interesting us as the companions and correspondents of Gray, Nicholls and Bonstetten have each written a sketch of Gray's character and mode of life. Nicholls' *Reminiscences of Gray* was written in 1805 and published in Mitford's edition in 1843, and in 1831 Bonstetten wrote *Souvenirs* of his own life, in which is a most interesting account of his intercourse with and impressions of Gray—quoted in Mitford's *Correspondence of Gray and Mason*, pp. 480-481.

In the summer of 1770 Gray made a tour in company with Nicholls through Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire, Herefordshire, and Shropshire, "five of the most beautiful counties of the Kingdom"; he descended the Wye in a boat for forty miles, its banks he thought "a succession of nameless wonders"; he also saw Tintern Abbey, Monmouth, and Oxford. This was the last of his tours; he had looked forward to accompanying Nicholls to Switzerland on a visit to his friend Bonstetten in the summer of 1771, but as the time approached he wrote to Nicholls that he "had neither health nor spirits all the winter"; and, soon after, "I am but indifferently well; and the sense of my own duty (which I do not perform), my own low spirits, and, added to these, a bodily indisposition, make it necessary for me to deny myself that pleasure." This was in the end of May; on the 28th June he writes:—"I foresee a new complaint that may tie me down perhaps to my bed, and expose me to the operations of a surgeon. God knows what will be the end of it." On the 24th July while at dinner in the College Hall he was taken suddenly ill; the next day the gout had reached his stomach, and he died before midnight on the 30th July, 1771.

In his will Gray desired that his body might be "deposited in the vault, made by my late dear mother in the churchyard of Stoke-Poges, near Slough in Buckinghamshire, by her remains." There he was buried on the 6th August, the grave, with its altar-shaped tombstone, being just outside the chancel window, and almost under the shadow of the ivy-mantled tower. The only inscription on the tombstone is that which he had put to the memory of his aunt and his mother; but a stone was placed by Mr. Penn in the wall of the church, with this inscription: "Opposite to this stone, in the same tomb upon which he has so feelingly recorded his grief at the loss of a beloved parent, are deposited the remains of Thomas Gray, the author of the Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard, etc. He was buried August 6th, 1771."

In 1778, on the same day (6th August, the anniversary of his funeral), "monuments to the memory of Spenser and Gray were opened in Westminster Abbey." * Gray's monument was erected by Mason; it is in Poets' Corner, just under the monument to Milton and next to that of Spenser; it consists of a medallion of Gray, and below the following inscription written by Mason:—

"No more the Grecian Muse unrivalled reigns,
To Britain let the nations homage pay;
She felt a Homer's fire in Milton's strains,
A Pindar's rapture in the lyre of Gray.
He died July 30th, 1771. Aged 54."

One defect in these lines is that there is as much about Milton as there is about Gray.

* *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1778.

In 1799, Mr. John Penn, the owner of Stoke Park, caused a large monumental cenotaph to be erected to Gray's memory in a field adjoining the churchyard at Stoke. On the four sides of the pedestal there are inscriptions; on the side facing the church there are the 27th and 28th stanzas of the *Elegy*—the eight lines beginning 'Hard by yon wood'; on the next side* facing north are six lines from the *Ode on Eton College*:—

"Ye distant spires, ye antique towers,
That crown the watry glade.
. . . . . .
Ah happy hills, ah pleasing shade,
Ah fields beloved in vain,
Where once my careless childhood strayed,
A stranger yet to pain!"

On the side * that looks east are the 4th and 9th stanzas from the *Elegy*, beginning—

"Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,"

and

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power."

On the fourth side there is the following inscription:—"This Monument, in honour of Thomas Gray, was erected A.D. 1799, among the scenes celebrated by that great

* It is a curious fact that in Howitt's *Homes and Haunts of the British Poets* the quotations on these two sides are incorrectly given—sixteen continuous lines being given from the *Eton Ode*, and the 4th and 5th stanzas of the *Elegy*; the inscription on the fourth side is also inaccurately quoted; and in Mr. Rolfe's American edition of Gray's *Poems*, while he takes credit for correcting Howitt, he also, in his revised edition, gives the wrong verse from the *Elegy*.

Lyric and Elegiac Poet. He died July 31,* 1771, and lies unnoted, in the churchyard adjoining, under the tombstone on which he piously and pathetically recorded the interment of his Aunt and lamented Mother."

In 1853 a bust of Gray, by Behnes, was presented by the seventh Earl of Carlisle to Eton College, and is placed in the upper school. And to further mark the poet's connection with Eton, the present Head-Master, Rev. E. Warre, D.D. (following the example of his predecessors, Dr. Balston and Dr. Hornby) presents a copy of Gray's Poems to each boy in the fifth and sixth forms who leaves Eton with a 'bene discessit,' and a handsomely-bound large edition to such as may have specially distinguished themselves.†

It was not till just a century after his death that at Cambridge due honour was done to the memory of Gray. When the College Hall at Peterhouse was restored in 1870 a stained glass window, drawn by Mr. F. Madox Brown, was presented by Mr. Hunt; and at Pembroke College a marble bust by Thornycroft was unveiled by Lord Houghton on the 26th May, 1885, and speeches were delivered in honour of the poet by Sir Frederick Leighton and Mr. Russell Lowell, the American Minister and himself a poet.

* This wrong date is given in several accounts of Gray's life, owing to Mason's wording in his *Memoirs*—"On the 30th the fit returned with increased violence, and on the *next evening* he expired."

† Dr. Goodford's 'leaving book' was a 'Terence,' Dr. Hawtrey's a 'Juvenal'; and in 1862 Dr. Balston adopted 'Gray' as the presentation book.

In 1775, MASON published his *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Gray.* This consisted of his Poems and a selection from his Letters, arranged so as to make Gray his own biographer, the thread of the narrative being completed where necessary by Mason. This, of course, is a standard work, and the one on which most subsequent editions of Gray's poems were based. Mason had been left in Gray's will all his "books, manuscripts, coins, music printed or written, and papers of all kinds, to preserve or destroy at his own discretion"; and with this material he was in a position to produce most interesting Memoirs of Gray. This his volumes undoubtedly are, but not only are they far from accurate in what they contain, but several passages of Gray's letters were suppressed or altered by Mason. I think Mason has received more blame for this than he deserves; he could never have anticipated the value we at the end of another century place on every scrap of Gray's writings; besides, several of Gray's occasional verses were satires on people then living, and in his letters to Mason himself he addressed him by a nickname, and with a freedom of censure and banter that neither would like to see in print.

Dr. JOHNSON, who was born before Gray, lived to include him in his *Lives of the English Poets*, published in 1779-81. Johnson was not by nature fitted to do Gray justice, and in addition to that he was near the end of his work, was in a hurry, and wished to be done; as Cole says, "When Johnson was publishing his *Life of Gray* I gave him several anecdotes, but he was very anxious as soon as possible to get to the end of his labours."

In 1783, there appeared a *Criticism on the Elegy Written*

in a Country Churchyard, being a Continuation of Dr. Johnson's Criticism of the Poems of Gray, pp. 148. This was published anonymously, and a second edition appeared in 1810; it was said to be by Professor YOUNG. It is a very curious and entertaining parody of Johnson's style, and contains much interesting matter, including the *Poetical Rondeau*, a poem attributed to Gray.

In 1785 the *Critical Essays on English Poets*, by JOHN SCOTT of Amwell, were published, one of which is his valuable criticism on Gray's *Elegy*, pp. 62.

In 1786 GILBERT WAKEFIELD, late Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge, published the *Poems of Gray with Notes*. The *Life* prefixed to it was the same as that in Bell's *Poets*, 1782, and contained nothing additional to what was in Mason's *Memoirs;* but the notes are valuable and more full than any that had as yet been given on an English poet. Wakefield says his notes were partly intended as "an antidote to Dr. Johnson's strictures, lest they might operate with malignant influence upon the public taste, and become ultimately injurious to the cause of polite literature." His notes consist mainly of parallel passages from ancient and modern poetry, as he considered that "no other author seemed to be a more proper vehicle for remarks of this nature than Mr. Gray; for he has exhibited a strength of imagination, a sublimity and tenderness of thought, equal to any writer; with a richness of phrase and an accuracy of composition, superior to all." From Wakefield's notes Mitford and subsequent editors have borrowed largely.

In 1799 a new edition of Gray's Poetical Works appeared—a very accurate copy, with some previously unpublished poems, and a new Life, without any editor's

name, but afterwards known to be by STEPHEN JONES; particular attention was paid to the punctuation, and the lines of the verses were now first indented.

In 1800 a second edition of Jones', still anonymous, and a beautiful edition, in two volumes, edited by UPCOTT, with numerous engravings by Fuseli; the copy of this in the British Museum contains some previously unpublished poems, and a large number of notes in Upcott's beautiful handwriting.

In 1814 MATHIAS published his large two-volume edition; the first volume being a reprint of Mason's, and the second containing Gray's 'Notes on Aristophanes,' 'Geographical Remarks on India and Persia,' an 'Account of the Writings of Plato,' with several minor pieces in prose and in Latin verse not previously published.

In 1814 MITFORD published, in one volume, the *Poems of Thomas Gray, with Critical Notes, Life of the Author, and an Essay on his Poetry.* This was the best edition that as yet had appeared, though it contained several inaccuracies in the text and in the quotations in the notes. For forty years the Rev. John Mitford continued to edit and work on Gray. In 1830 he edited the poems for the Aldine Poets; in 1836-43 he edited the entire works in five volumes for Pickering; in the 1843 edition of these volumes, Norton Nicholls' *Reminiscences of Gray,* and much additional matter were included; in 1845 he wrote a new Life of Gray for the Eton Edition of Gray's Poems; and in 1853 he published the *Correspondence of Gray and Mason, with Letters to Brown.* In addition to these publications Mitford left several volumes of MSS., most of those relating to Gray being copies made by him

of unpublished writings of Gray; these were recently * acquired by the British Museum, and I have been able to make use of them for this edition.

In 1882 Mr. EDMUND GOSSE'S "Gray" in the *English Men of Letters* series appeared, and is the most complete account of Gray's Life and Writings yet published. In 1884 Mr. GOSSE edited for Messrs. Macmillan and Co. the *Works of Gray in Prose and Verse*, in four volumes, which "present to the public for the first time a consecutive collection of Gray's letters and essays"; the text of the Poems, however, is not perfectly accurate.

In 1890 the Rev. D. C. TOVEY published *Gray and his Friends: Letters and Relics, in great part hitherto unpublished;* containing several unpublished letters of Gray, Walpole, and Ashton; Correspondence and Remains of West; two letters from Miss Speed to Gray; Gray's Notes of Travel in France, Italy, and Scotland, and various fragments from the Mitford MSS.

To these may be added the most recent criticisms on Gray—Matthew Arnold's in Ward's *English Poets*, and Mr. Leslie Stephen's Life of Gray in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

The English verse of Gray not included in the present edition of his Poems comprises his translations and several incomplete poems, satirical pieces, and fragments of verse; the only editions of Gray in which all these are to be found are in Mr. Gosse's edition of Gray's Works, and in the new Aldine edition of Gray's Poems, edited by myself. These are:—

Translations.—A passage from the *Thebais* of Statius,

* Purchased at the Crossley Sale at Sotheby's, 20th June, 1885.

the 'game of quoits,' about 90 lines sent in a letter to West in May, 1736. About 70 lines from Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*, written in 1738. From the *Elegies* of Propertius, 54 lines in 1738, and 108 lines in 1742. From the *Inferno* of Dante, 84 lines, recently discovered and now in the Mitford MSS.

Unfinished Poems.—Agrippina—the first scene of a tragedy, nearly 200 lines in blank verse, written 1741-1742. *Hymn to Ignorance*,—a fragment of 38 lines, a satire on the course of study and student life at Cambridge. *The Alliance of Education and Government*, 107 lines. Of this Gibbon writes:—"Instead of compiling tables of chronology and natural history, why did not Mr. Gray apply the powers of his genius to finish the philosophic poem of which he has left such an exquisite specimen?"

Occasional Verse and Satirical Lines.—The Candidate (also called *Jemmy Twitcher*); *or, The Cambridge Courtship*, —a lampoon of 34 lines on the Earl of Sandwich on the occasion of his being a candidate for the office of High Steward of the University of Cambridge in May, 1764. *A Satire on the Heads of Houses*,—36 doggerel lines on the Masters of the Colleges, written about 1765.

Impromptu, suggested by a view in 1766 *of the seat and ruins of a deceased nobleman at Kingsgate, Kent*,—24 lines on the house built for Lord Holland in imitation of Cicero's Formian villa at Baiæ, by Lord Newborough.

Comic Lines, in a letter to Mason, dated 8th Jan., 1768,—8 lines describing several of his and Mason's friends as expecting the latter, each being caricatured.

Tophet,—8 lines written under a caricature of the Rev. Henry Etough.

Epitaph on Mrs. Mason,—4 lines which Gray substituted for the last four Mason wrote in an epitaph on his wife for her monument in the cathedral at Bristol.

Extempore couplets and rhymes of a trifling nature, preserved merely because Gray's.

Doubtful Poems.—An *Ode* of 9 eight-line stanzas, a *Poetical Rondeau*, and the *Characters of the Christ-cross-row.*

One of the first things that strikes one with reference to the poetry of Gray is the small quantity of it; as Dickens once said, no poet ever gained a place among the immortals with so small a volume under his arm. But Gray wrote only for himself or his friends, and it was merely when pressed by them or by the publishers that he published anything; the *Elegy* was being circulated in manuscript for months, and it was only when it was about to be printed in an unauthorized manner that he caused it to be published, and even then without his name. What he says of his verses was true of himself—

"To censure cold and negligent of fame."

Nor did he write for money; "he could not bear," we are told, "to be thought a professed man of letters, but wished to be regarded as a private gentleman who read for his amusement."

The chief characteristics of Gray's poetry are the musical sweetness of the versification and his felicity of expression, "the style," he says, "I have aimed at is extreme conciseness of expression, yet pure, perspicuous, and musical;" and beside these a 'philosophic pathos,' to use Coleridge's phrase in describing one of the excel-

lences of the poetry of Wordsworth. His chief merit as a poet, however, lies in his art. "Gray," writes Matthew Arnold, "holds his high rank as a poet, not merely by the beauty and grace of passages in his poems; not merely by a diction generally pure in an age of impure diction; he holds it, above all, by the power and skill with which the evolution of his poems is conducted. Here is his grand superiority to Collins, whose diction in his best poem—the *Ode to Evening*—is purer than Gray's; but then the *Ode to Evening* is like a river which loses itself in the sand, whereas Gray's best poems have an evolution sure and satisfying." *

"The term *evolution* in poetical criticism describes the mode in which a poem is built up, or grows up, like a building or a tree, into the certain form which is the most appropriate and sufficient for the thoughts and images which possess the poet's mind. Much admirable poetry, most poetry of the romantic class, has no evolution at all, but ceases abruptly when the emotion flags." The odes of many of even our greatest poets are each merely "a cluster of stanzas loosely joined together, and more or less beautiful in the detail of its parts"; but "the least inspired of Gray's Odes has this peculiarity that it starts from a point which the poet has fixed upon, covers a certain area of thought, which he has accurately measured, and closes inevitably at the moment when he has said all that occurs to him and no more." †

Dryden and Milton seem to be the poets from whom Gray chiefly formed his style; he cites Milton as the "best example of an exquisite ear that he can produce";

* *Emerson. Macmillan's Magazine*, May, 1884.

† Gosse: *Clarendon Press Edition of Gray.*

and he seems to me to have borrowed more of the language and phraseology of Milton than that of any other poet; and of Dryden he writes that "if there was any excellence in his own numbers he had learned it wholly from that great poet." Norton Nicholls writes: "Spenser was among his favourite poets, and he told me he never sat down to compose poetry without reading Spenser for a considerable time previously. He admired Dryden and could not patiently hear him criticized; *Absalom and Achitophel* and *Theodore and Honoria* stood in the first rank of poems in his estimation. He placed Shakspere high above all poets of all countries and all ages. . . . I asked him why he had not continued that beautiful fragment beginning

'As sickly plants betray a niggard earth,'*

he said 'because he could not'; when I expressed surprise at this, he explained himself as follows, that he had been used to write only lyric poetry, in which, the poems being short, he had accustomed himself, and was able to polish every part; that this having become habit he could not write otherwise, and that the labour of this method in a long poem would be intolerable. . . . He thought Goldsmith a genuine poet. I was with him at Malvern when he received the *Deserted Village*, which he desired me to read to him; and he listened with fixed attention, and soon exclaimed, 'This man is a poet.'"

A point which I have nowhere seen noted in connection with Gray's style is the frequency with which he uses a word or phrase that seems to please him, several

* *Alliance of Education and Government.*

instances of which I have cited in the Notes. Another (to which I have referred in the note on line 63 of the *Elegy*) is his reproducing in his printed poems words and thoughts from the verses that he set aside and never intended for publication. I have cited several such from *Agrippina*, and there are others in his Translations, —that remarkable expression 'luxury of light,' in the *Stanzas to Bentley*, he had already written in the beautiful lines in his Translation from Tasso so long previously as 1738; and his *Alliance of Education and Government* contains several words used in a connection almost peculiar to Gray, *e.g.*, that most unpoetical word 'circumscribed' (familiar from the *Elegy*) occurs in a passage that may be quoted as a specimen of the poetry which he did not think worth publishing:—

"Unmanly thought! what seasons can control,
What fancied zone can circumscribe the Soul,
Who, conscious of the source from whence she springs,
By reason's light on resolution's wings,
Spite of her frail companion dauntless goes
O'er Libya's deserts and through Zembla's snows?
She bids each slumb'ring energy awake,
Another touch, another temper take,
Suspends th' inferior laws that rule our clay;
The stubborn elements confess her sway,
Their little wants, their low desires refine,
And raise the mortal to a height divine."

Another peculiarity of Gray's is his use of compounds, not merely such as 'many-twinkling' and 'ivy-mantled,' but 'desert-beach,' 'vermeil-cheek,' 'iron-sleep,' 'iron-sleet,' 'virgin-grace,' 'tyrant-power,' 'velvet-green,' and others in which the second part as well as the whole word is a substantive.

The principal defects in Gray's poetry are an excess of allegory and rhetoric, and a too frequent recurrence of personification, sometimes so vague that, as Coleridge observes in his remarks on the well-known passage in the *Bard*—"Youth at the prow and Pleasure at the helm"—"it depends wholly in the compositor's putting or not putting a capital, both in this and many other passages, whether the words should be personifications or mere abstracts."

The charge of obscurity is less likely to be made in the present day than it was when his Pindaric Odes appeared, when notes were necessary "to tell the gentle reader," as Gray says, "that Edward I. was not Oliver Cromwell nor Queen Elizabeth the Witch of Endor"; but if such there be, his own motto to the *Odes* is his reply, "Vocal to the intelligent, for the many they need interpreters." As Coleridge says to those who complained of his poems being obscure, "If any man expect from my poems the same easiness of style which he admires in a drinking song, for him I have not written. Intelligibilia, non intellectum adfero."

POEMS.

The footnotes are by Gray, and are from the edition published by Dodsley in 1768, entitled 'Poems by Mr. Gray,' and containing the first ten of the following Poems in the same order. He has not always given the line, etc., where a quotation is to be found, but the reference is supplied here; and most of his quotations seem to have been made from memory, but such as are inaccurate are correctly given in the Notes.

POEMS.

I.

ODE ON THE SPRING.

Lo! where the rosy-bosomed Hours,
Fair Venus' train, appear,
Disclose the long-expecting flowers,
And wake the purple year!
The Attic warbler pours her throat,
Responsive to the cuckoo's note,
The untaught harmony of spring;
While, whisp'ring pleasure as they fly,
Cool Zephyrs thro' the clear blue sky
Their gathered fragrance fling.

Where'er the oak's thick branches stretch
A broader brownier shade,
Where'er the rude and moss-grown beech
O'er-canopies the glade,
Beside some water's rushy brink
With me the Muse shall sit, and think
(At ease reclined in rustic state)
How vain the ardour of the Crowd,

---

14. . . . a bank
O'ercanopied with luscious woodbine.
Shakespeare, *Midsummer Night's Dream.*

How low, how little are the Proud,
How indigent the Great!

Still is the toiling hand of Care;
The panting herds repose;
Yet hark, how thro' the peopled air
The busy murmur glows!
The insect youth are on the wing,
Eager to taste the honied spring,
And float amid the liquid noon;
Some lightly o'er the current skim,
Some show their gaily-gilded trim
Quick-glancing to the sun.

To Contemplation's sober eye
Such is the race of Man;
And they that creep, and they that fly,
Shall end where they began.
Alike the Busy and the Gay
But flutter thro' life's little day,
In fortune's varying colours drest;
Brushed by the hand of rough Mischance,
Or chilled by age, their airy dance
They leave, in dust to rest.

Methinks I hear in accents low
The sportive kind reply:
Poor moralist! and what art thou?
A solitary fly!

---

27. Nare per æstatem liquidam.
Virgil, *Georgics*, iv. 59.

30. Sporting with quick glance
Show to the sun their waved coats dropped with gold.
Milton's *Paradise Lost*, vii. 410.

31. While insects from the threshold preach, etc.
M. Green, in *The Grotto*. Dodsley's *Miscellanies*, v. 161.

Thy Joys no glittering female meets,
No hive hast thou of hoarded sweets,
No painted plumage to display;
On hasty wings thy youth is flown;
Thy sun is set, thy spring is gone—
We frolic, while 'tis May.

II.

ODE ON THE DEATH OF A FAVOURITE CAT,

DROWNED IN A TUB OF GOLD FISHES.

'Twas on a lofty vase's side,
Where China's gayest art had dyed
The azure flowers, that blow;
Demurest of the tabby kind,
The pensive Selima, reclined,
Gazed on the lake below.

Her conscious tail her joy declared;
The fair round face, the snowy beard,
The velvet of her paws,
Her coat, that with the tortoise vies,
Her ears of jet, and emerald eyes,
She saw; and purred applause.

Still had she gazed; but 'midst the tide
Two angel forms were seen to glide,
The Genii of the stream;
Their scaly armour's Tyrian hue
Thro' richest purple to the view
Betrayed a golden gleam.

The hapless Nymph with wonder saw;
A whisker first and then a claw,
With many an ardent wish,

She stretched in vain to reach the prize.
What female heart can gold despise?
What Cat's averse to fish?

Presumptuous Maid! with looks intent
Again she stretched, again she bent,
Nor knew the gulf between.
(Malignant Fate sat by, and smiled)
The slipp'ry verge her feet beguiled,
She tumbled headlong in.

Eight times emerging from the flood
She mewed to ev'ry watry God,
Some speedy aid to send.
No Dolphin came, no Nereid stirred;
Nor cruel *Tom*, nor *Susan* heard.
A Fav'rite has no friend!

From hence, ye Beauties, undeceived,
Know, one false step is ne'er retrieved,
And be with caution bold.
Not all that tempts your wand'ring eyes
And heedless hearts is lawful prize,
Nor all, that glisters, gold.

III.

ODE ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON COLLEGE.

Ανθρωπος, ικανὴ πρόφασις εἰς τὸ δυστυχεῖν.—Menander.

Ye distant spires, ye antique towers,
That crown the watry glade,
Where grateful Science still adores
Her Henry's holy Shade;

4. King Henry the Sixth, Founder of the College.

And ye, that from the stately brow
Of WINDSOR'S heights th' expanse below
  Of grove, of lawn, of mead survey,
Whose turf, whose shade, whose flowers among
Wanders the hoary Thames along
  His silver-winding way.

Ah happy hills, ah pleasing shade,
  Ah fields beloved in vain,
Where once my careless childhood strayed,
  A stranger yet to pain!
I feel the gales, that from ye blow,
A momentary bliss bestow,
  As waving fresh their gladsome wing,
My weary soul they seem to soothe,
And, redolent of joy and youth,
  To breathe a second spring.

Say, Father THAMES, for thou hast seen
  Full many a sprightly race
Disporting on thy margent green
  The paths of pleasure trace,
Who foremost now delight to cleave
With pliant arm thy glassy wave?
  The captive linnet which enthral?
What idle progeny succeed
To chase the rolling circle's speed,
  Or urge the flying ball?

While some on earnest business bent
  Their murm'ring labours ply
'Gainst graver hours, that bring constraint
  To sweeten liberty;

19. **And bees their honey redolent of spring.**
Dryden, *Fable on the Pythagorean System.*

Some bold adventurers disdain
The limits of their little reign,
  And unknown regions dare descry;
Still as they run they look behind,
They hear a voice in every wind,
  And snatch a fearful joy.

Gay hope is theirs by fancy fed,
  Less pleasing when possest;
The tear forgot as soon as shed,
  The sunshine of the breast;
Theirs buxom health of rosy hue,
Wild wit, invention ever-new,
  And lively cheer of vigour born;
The thoughtless day, the easy night,
The spirits pure, the slumbers light,
  That fly th' approach of morn.

Alas, regardless of their doom,
  The little victims play!
No sense have they of ills to come,
  Nor care beyond to-day;
Yet see how all around 'em wait
The Ministers of human fate,
  And black Misfortune's baleful train!
Ah, show them where in ambush stand
To seize their prey the murth'rous band!
  Ah, tell them, they are men!

These shall the fury Passions tear,
  The vultures of the mind,
Disdainful Anger, pallid Fear,
  And Shame that skulks behind;
Or pining Love shall waste their youth,
Or Jealousy with rankling tooth,

That inly gnaws the secret heart,
And Envy wan, and faded Care,
Grim-visaged comfortless Despair,
And Sorrow's piercing dart.

Ambition this shall tempt to rise,
Then whirl the wretch from high,
To bitter Scorn a sacrifice,
And grinning Infamy.
The stings of Falsehood those shall try,
And hard Unkindness' altered eye,
That mocks the tear it forced to flow;
And keen Remorse with blood defiled,
And moody Madness laughing wild
Amid severest woe.

Lo, in the vale of years beneath
A grisly troop are seen,
The painful family of Death,
More hideous than their Queen;
This racks the joints, this fires the veins,
That every labouring sinew strains,
Those in the deeper vitals rage;
Lo, Poverty, to fill the band,
That numbs the soul with icy hand,
And slow-consuming Age.

To each his suff'rings; all are men,
Condemned alike to groan,
The tender for another's pain;
Th' unfeeling for his own.
Yet ah! why should they know their fate
Since sorrow never comes too late,

---

79. Madness laughing in his ireful mood.
Dryden's *Fable of Palamon and Arcite.*

And happiness too swiftly flies.
Thought would destroy their paradise.
No more; where ignorance is bliss,
'Tis folly to be wise.

IV.

HYMN TO ADVERSITY.

Ζῆνα . . .
τὸν φρονεῖν βροτοὺς ὁδώ-
σαντα, τῷ πάθει μάθος
θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν.—Æschylus, *in Agamemnone.*

Daughter of Jove, relentless Power,
Thou Tamer of the human breast,
Whose iron scourge and tort'ring hour
The Bad affright, afflict the Best!
Bound in thy adamantine chain
The Proud are taught to taste of pain,
And purple Tyrants vainly groan
With pangs unfelt before, unpitied and alone.

When first thy Sire to send on earth
Virtue, his darling Child, designed,
To thee he gave the heav'nly Birth,
And bad to form her infant mind.
Stern rugged Nurse! thy rigid lore
With patience many a year she bore;
What sorrow was, thou bad'st her know,
And from her own she learned to melt at others' woe.

Scared at thy frown terrific, fly
Self-pleasing Folly's idle brood,
Wild Laughter, Noise, and thoughtless Joy,
And leave us leisure to be good.

Light they disperse, and with them go
The summer Friend, the flatt'ring Foe;
By vain Prosperity received,
To her they vow their truth, and are again believed.

Wisdom in sable garb arrayed
Immersed in rapt'rous thought profound,
And Melancholy, silent maid
With leaden eye, that loves the ground,
Still on thy solemn steps attend;
Warm Charity, the general Friend,
With Justice to herself severe,
And Pity, dropping soft the sadly-pleasing tear.

Oh, gently on thy Suppliant's head,
Dread Goddess, lay thy chast'ning hand!
Not in thy Gorgon terrors clad,
Nor circled with the vengeful Band
(As by the Impious thou art seen)
With thund'ring voice, and threat'ning mien,
With screaming Horror's funeral cry,
Despair, and fell Disease, and ghastly Poverty.

Thy form benign, oh Goddess, wear,
Thy milder influence impart,
Thy philosophic train be there
To soften, not to wound my heart,
The gen'rous spark extinct revive,
Teach me to love and to forgive,
Exact my own defects to scan,
What others are, to feel, and know myself a Man.

V.

THE PROGRESS OF POESY.

A PINDARIC ODE.

Φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσιν· ἐς δὲ τὸ πᾶν ἑρμηνέων
χατίζει.—Pindar, *Olymp.* ii.

I. 1.

AWAKE, Æolian lyre, awake,
And give to rapture all thy trembling strings.
From Helicon's harmonious springs
A thousand rills their mazy progress take;
The laughing flowers, that round them blow,
Drink life and fragrance as they flow.
Now the rich stream of music winds along
Deep, majestic, smooth, and strong,
Through verdant vales, and Ceres' golden reign;
Now rolling down the steep amain,
Headlong, impetuous, see it pour;
The rocks and nodding groves rebellow to the roar.

I. 2.

Oh! sovereign of the willing soul,
Parent of sweet and solemn-breathing airs,

---

1. Awake, my glory; awake, lute and harp.—David's *Psalms.*

Pindar styles his own poetry, with its musical accompaniments, *Αἰολὶς μολπὴ, Αἰολίδες χορδαὶ, Αἰολίδων πνοαὶ αὐλῶν*, Æolian song, Æolian strings, the breath of the Æolian flute.

The subject and simile, as usual with Pindar, are united. The various sources of poetry, which gives life and lustre to all it touches, are here described; its quiet majestic progress enriching every subject (otherwise dry and barren) with a pomp of diction and luxuriant harmony of numbers; and its more rapid and irresistible course, when swoln and hurried away by the conflict of tumultuous passions.

Enchanting shell! the sullen Cares
And frantic Passions hear thy soft control.
On Thracia's hills the Lord of War
Has curbed the fury of his car,
And dropped his thirsty lance at thy command.
Perching on the sceptered hand
Of Jove, thy magic lulls the feathered king
With ruffled plumes, and flagging wing;
Quenched in dark clouds of slumber lie
The terror of his beak, and light'nings of his eye.

I. 3.

Thee the voice, the dance, obey,
Tempered to thy warbled lay.
O'er Idalia's velvet green
The rosy-crowned Loves are seen
On Cytherea's day,
With antic Sports, and blue-eyed Pleasures,
Frisking light in frolic measures;
Now pursuing, now retreating,
Now in circling troops they meet;
To brisk notes in cadence beating
Glance their many-twinkling feet.
Slow melting strains their Queen's approach declare;
Where'er she turns the Graces homage pay.
With arms sublime, that float upon the air,
In gliding state she wins her easy way;

13-24. Power of harmony to calm the turbulent sallies of the soul. The thoughts are borrowed from the first Pythian of Pindar.

20. This is a weak imitation of some incomparable lines in the same Ode.

25-41. Power of harmony to produce all the graces of motion in the body.

35. Μαρμαρυγὰς θηεῖτο ποδῶν· θαύμαζε δὲ θυμῷ. Homer, *Od.* Θ. 265.

O'er her warm cheek, and rising bosom, move
The bloom of young Desire, and purple light of Love.

II. 1.

Man's feeble race what Ills await,
Labour, and Penury, the racks of Pain,
Disease, and Sorrow's weeping train,
And Death, sad refuge from the storms of Fate!
The fond complaint, my Song, disprove,
And justify the laws of Jove.
Say, has he giv'n in vain the heav'nly Muse?
Night, and all her sickly dews,
Her Spectres wan, and Birds of boding cry,
He gives to range the dreary sky;
Till down the eastern cliffs afar
Hyperion's march they spy, and glitt'ring shafts of war.

II. 2.

In climes beyond the solar road,
Where shaggy forms o'er ice-built mountains roam,

---

41. Λάμπει δ' ἐπὶ πορφυρέῃσι
Παρείῃσι φῶς ἔρωτος.—Phrynichus, apud Athenæum.

42-53. To compensate the real and imaginary ills of life, the Muse was given to mankind by the same Providence that sends the Day, by its cheerful presence, to dispel the gloom and terrors of the Night.

52. Or seen the Morning's well-appointed Star
Come marching up the eastern hills afar.—*Cowley.*

54-65. Extensive influence of poetic-Genius over the remotest and most uncivilised nations; its connection with liberty, and the virtues that naturally attend on it. (See the Erse, Norwegian, and Welsh fragments, the Lapland and American songs.)

54. Extra anni solisque vias.—Virgil, *Æneid*, vi. 795.
Tutta lontana dal camin del sole.—Petrarch, *Canzon.* 2.

The Muse has broke the twilight-gloom
To cheer the shiv'ring Native's dull abode.
And oft, beneath the od'rous shade
Of Chili's boundless forests laid,
She deigns to hear the savage Youth repeat
In loose numbers wildly sweet
Their feather-cinctured Chiefs, and dusky Loves.
Her track, where'er the Goddess roves,
Glory pursue, and generous Shame,
Th' unconquerable Mind, and Freedom's holy flame.

II. 3.

Woods, that wave o'er Delphi's steep,
Isles, that crown th' Egæan deep,
Fields, that cool Ilissus laves,
Or where Mæander's amber waves
In lingering lab'rinths creep,
How do your tuneful Echoes languish,
Mute, but to the voice of Anguish?
Where each old poetic mountain
Inspiration breathed around;
Ev'ry shade and hallowed fountain
Murmured deep a solemn sound;
Till the sad Nine in Greece's evil hour
Left their Parnassus for the Latian plains.
Alike they scorn the pomp of tyrant-Power,
And coward Vice, that revels in her chains.
When Latium had her lofty spirit lost,
They sought, oh Albion! next thy sea-encircled coast.

66-82. Progress of Poetry from Greece to Italy, and from Italy to England. Chaucer was not unacquainted with the writings of Dante or of Petrarch. The Earl of Surrey and Sir Tho. Wyatt had travelled in Italy, and formed their taste there; Spenser imitated the Italian writers; Milton improved on them; but this School expired soon after the Restoration, and a new one arose on the French model, which has subsisted ever since.

III. 1.

Far from the sun and summer-gale,
In thy green lap was Nature's Darling laid,
What time, where lucid Avon strayed,
To him the mighty Mother did unveil
Her awful face. The dauntless Child
Stretched forth his little arms, and smiled.
'This pencil take' (she said) 'whose colours clear
Richly paint the vernal year;
Thine too these golden keys, immortal Boy!
This can unlock the gates of Joy;
Of Horror that, and thrilling Fears,
Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic Tears.'

III. 2.

Nor second He, that rode sublime
Upon the seraph-wings of Ecstasy,
The secrets of th' Abyss to spy.
He passed the flaming bounds of Place and Time;
The living Throne, the sapphire-blaze,
Where Angels tremble, while they gaze,
He saw; but, blasted with excess of light,
Closed his eyes in endless night.
Behold, where Dryden's less presumptuous car
Wide o'er the fields of Glory bear

---

84. Shakespeare. 95. Milton.

98. Flammantia mœnia mundi.—*Lucretius*, i. 74.

99. For the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels . . . And above the firmament, that was over their heads, was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire-stone. . . . This was the appearance of the glory of the Lord.—*Ezekiel*, i. 20, 26, 28.

102. Ὀφθαλμῶν μὲν ἄμερσε· δίδου δ' ἠδεῖαν ἀοιδήν.
Homer, *Odyssey*, Θ. 64.

105. Meant to express the stately march and sounding energy of Dryden's rhimes.

Two Coursers of ethereal race,
With necks in thunder clothed, and long-resounding pace.

III. 3.

Hark, his hands the lyre explore!
Bright-eyed Fancy hovering o'er
Scatters from her pictured urn
Thoughts, that breathe, and words, that burn.
But ah! 'tis heard no more.——
Oh! Lyre divine, what daring Spirit
Wakes thee now? tho' he inherit
Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,
That the Theban Eagle bear
Sailing with supreme dominion
Through the azure deep of air;
Yet oft before his infant eyes would run
Such forms, as glitter in the Muse's ray
With orient hues, unborrowed of the Sun;
Yet shall he mount, and keep his distant way
Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,
Beneath the Good how far—but far above the Great.

---

106. Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?—*Job* xxxix. 19.

110. Words, that weep, and tears, that speak.—*Cowley.*

111. We have had in our language no other odes of the sublime kind, than that of Dryden on St. Cecilia's Day; for Cowley (who had his merit) yet wanted judgment, style, and harmony, for such a task. That of Pope is not worthy of so great a man. Mr. Mason indeed of late days has touched the true chords, and with a masterly hand, in some of his Choruses,—above all in the last of *Caractacus*:—Hark! heard ye not yon footstep dread? etc.

115. Διὸς πρὸς ὄρνιχα θεῖον. *Olymp.* ii. 159. Pindar compares himself to that bird, and his enemies to ravens that croak and clamour in vain below, while it pursues its flight, regardless of their noise.

VI.

THE BARD.

A PINDARIC ODE.

The following Ode is founded on a tradition current in Wales, that Edward the First, when he completed the conquest of that country, ordered all the bards that fell into his hands to be put to death.

I. 1.

'Ruin seize thee, ruthless King!
'Confusion on thy banners wait,
'Tho' fanned by Conquest's crimson wing
'They mock the air with idle state.
'Helm, nor hauberk's twisted mail,
'Nor even thy virtues, Tyrant, shall avail
'To save thy secret soul from nightly fears,
'From Cambria's curse, from Cambria's tears!'

Such were the sounds, that o'er the crested pride
Of the first Edward scattered wild dismay,
As down the steep of Snowdon's shaggy side
He wound with toilsome march his long array.

---

4. Mocking the air with colours idly spread.
Shakespeare's *King John*, v. 1.

5. The hauberk was a texture of steel ringlets, or rings interwoven, forming a coat of mail, that sat close to the body, and adapted itself to every motion.

9. The crested adder's pride.—Dryden's *Indian Queen*.

11. *Snowdon* was a name given by the Saxons to that mountainous tract which the Welsh themselves call *Craigian-eryri;* it included all the highlands of Caernarvonshire and Merionethshire, as far east as the river Conway. R. Hygden, speaking of the castle of Conway built by King Edward the first, says, "Ad ortum amnis Conway ad clivum montis Erery;" and Matthew of Westminster (ad ann. 1283), "Apud Aberconway ad pedes montis Snowdoniæ fecit erigi castrum forte."

Stout Glo'ster stood aghast in speechless trance;
'To arms!' cried Mortimer, and couched his quiv'ring lance.

I. 2.

On a rock, whose haughty brow
Frowns o'er old Conway's foaming flood,
Robed in the sable garb of woe,
With haggard eyes the Poet stood;
(Loose his beard, and hoary hair
Streamed, like a meteor, to the troubled air)
And with a Master's hand, and Prophet's fire,
Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre.

'Hark, how each giant-oak, and desert cave,
'Sighs to the torrent's awful voice beneath!
'O'er thee, oh King! their hundred arms they wave,
'Revenge on thee in hoarser murmurs breathe;
'Vocal no more, since Cambria's fatal day,
'To high-born Hoel's harp, or soft Llewellyn's lay.

I. 3.

'Cold is Cadwallo's tongue,
'That hushed the stormy main;

---

13. Gilbert de Clare, surnamed the Red, Earl of Gloucester and Hertford, son-in-law to King Edward.

14. Edmond de Mortimer, Lord of Wigmore. They both were *Lords-Marchers*, whose lands lay on the borders of Wales, and probably accompanied the king in this expedition.

19. The image was taken from a well-known picture of Raphael, representing the Supreme Being in the vision of Ezekiel. There are two of these paintings (both believed original), one at Florence, the other at Paris.

20. Shone, like a meteor, streaming to the wind.
Milton's *Paradise Lost*, i. 537.

'Brave Urien sleeps upon his craggy bed;
'Mountains, ye mourn in vain
'Modred, whose magic song
'Made huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-topped head.
'On dreary Arvon's shore they lie,
'Smeared with gore, and ghastly pale;
'Far, far aloof th' affrighted ravens sail;
'The famished Eagle screams, and passes by.
'Dear lost companions of my tuneful art,
'Dear, as the light that visits these sad eyes,
'Dear as the ruddy drops that warm my heart,
'Ye died amidst your dying country's cries—
'No more I weep. They do not sleep.
'On yonder cliffs, a grisly band,
'I see them sit, they linger yet,
'Avengers of their native land;
'With me in dreadful harmony they join,
'And weave with bloody hands the tissue of thy line.'

II. 1.

"Weave the warp, and weave the woof,
"The winding-sheet of Edward's race.

35. The shores of Caernarvonshire opposite to the isle of Anglesey.

38. Cambden and others observe, that eagles used annually to build their aerie among the rocks of Snowdon, which from thence (as some think) were named by the Welsh *Craigian-eryri*, or the crags of the eagles. At this day (I am told) the highest point of Snowdon is called *the eagle's nest*. That bird is certainly no stranger to this island, as the Scots, and the people of Cumberland, Westmoreland, etc., can testify; it even has built its nest in the Peak of Derbyshire. (See Willoughby's *Ornithol.*, published by Ray).

40. As dear to me as are the ruddy drops
That visit my sad heart.—*Julius Cæsar*, ii. 1.

48. See the Norwegian Ode, that follows.

"Give ample room, and verge enough
"The characters of hell to trace.
"Mark the year, and mark the night,
"When Severn shall re-echo with affright
"The shrieks of death, thro' Berkley's roofs that ring,
"Shrieks of an agonizing King!
"She-Wolf of France, with unrelenting fangs,
"That tear'st the bowels of thy mangled Mate,
"From thee be born, who o'er thy country hangs
"The scourge of Heaven. What Terrors round him wait!
"Amazement in his van, with Flight combined,
"And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude behind.

II. 2.

"Mighty Victor, mighty Lord!
"Low on his funeral couch he lies!
"No pitying heart, no eye, afford
"A tear to grace his obsequies.
"Is the sable Warrior fled?
"Thy son is gone. He rests among the Dead.
"The Swarm, that in thy noon-tide beam were born?
"Gone to salute the rising Morn.
"Fair laughs the Morn, and soft the Zephyr blows,
"While proudly riding o'er the azure realm
"In gallant trim the gilded Vessel goes;
"Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm;

---

54. Edward the Second, cruelly butchered in Berkley-Castle.

57. Isabel of France, Edward the Second's adulterous Queen.

59. Triumphs of Edward the Third in France.

64. Death of that King, abandoned by his Children, and even robbed in his last moments by his Courtiers and his Mistress.

67. Edward, the Black Prince, dead some time before his Father.

70. Magnificence of Richard the Second's reign. See Froissard and other contemporary writers.

"Regardless of the sweeping Whirlwind's sway,
"That, hushed in grim repose, expects his evening-prey.

II. 3.

"Fill high the sparkling bowl,
"The rich repast prepare,
"Reft of a crown, he yet may share the feast;
"Close by the regal chair
"Fell Thirst and Famine scowl
"A baleful smile upon their baffled Guest.
"Heard ye the din of battle bray,
"Lance to lance, and horse to horse?
"Long Years of havoc urge their destined course,
"And thro' the kindred squadrons mow their way.
"Ye Towers of Julius, London's lasting shame,
"With many a foul and midnight murther fed,
"Revere his Consort's faith, his Father's* fame,
"And spare the meek Usurper's holy head.
"Above, below, the rose of snow,
"Twined with her blushing foe, we spread;

77-82. Richard the Second (as we are told by Archbishop Scroop and the confederate Lords in their manifesto, by Thomas of Walsingham, and all the older writers), was starved to death. The story of his assassination by Sir Piers of Exon, is of much later date.

83. Ruinous civil wars of York and Lancaster.

87. Henry the Sixth, George Duke of Clarence, Edward the Fifth, Richard Duke of York, etc., believed to be murthered secretly in the Tower of London. The oldest part of that structure is vulgarly attributed to Julius Cæsar.

89. Margaret of Anjou, a woman of heroic spirit, who struggled hard to save her Husband and her Crown.

* Henry the Fifth.

90. Henry the Sixth very near being canonised. The line of Lancaster had no right of inheritance to the Crown.

91. The white and red roses, devices of York and Lancaster.

"The bristled Boar in infant gore
"Wallows beneath the thorny shade.
"Now, Brothers, bending o'er th' accursed loom
"Stamp we our vengeance deep, and ratify his doom.

III. 1.

"Edward, lo! to sudden fate
"(Weave we the woof. The thread is spun.)
"Half of thy heart we consecrate.
"(The web is wove. The work is done.)"

'Stay, oh stay! nor thus forlorn
'Leave me unblessed, unpitied, here to mourn;
'In yon bright track, that fires the western skies,
'They melt, they vanish from my eyes.
'But oh! what solemn scenes on Snowdon's height
'Descending slow their glitt'ring skirts unroll?
'Visions of glory, spare my aching sight,
'Ye unborn Ages, crowd not on my soul!
'No more our long-lost Arthur we bewail.
'All hail, ye genuine Kings, Britannia's Issue, hail!

93. The silver Boar was the badge of Richard the Third; whence he was usually known in his own time by the name of *the Boar*.

99. Eleanor of Castile died a few years after the conquest of Wales. The heroic proof she gave of her affection for her Lord is well known. The monuments of his regret and sorrow for the loss of her are still to be seen at Northampton, Geddington, Waltham, and other places.

109. It was the common belief of the Welsh nation that King Arthur was still alive in Fairy-Land, and should return again to reign over Britain.

110. Accession of the line of Tudor.—Ed. 1757. Both Merlin and Taliessin had prophesied that the Welsh should regain their sovereignty over this island; which seemed to be accomplished in the House of Tudor.

III. 2.

'Girt with many a Baron bold
'Sublime their starry fronts they rear;
'And gorgeous Dames, and Statesmen old
'In bearded majesty, appear.
'In the midst a Form divine!
'Her eye proclaims her of the Briton-Line;
'Her lion-port, her awe-commanding face,
'Attempered sweet to virgin-grace.
'What strings symphonious tremble in the air,
'What strains of vocal transport round her play!
'Hear from the grave, great Taliessin, hear;
'They breathe a soul to animate thy clay.
'Bright Rapture calls, and soaring, as she sings,
'Waves in the eye of Heav'n her many-coloured wings.

III. 3.

'The verse adorn again
'Fierce War and faithful Love,
'And Truth severe, by fairy Fiction drest.
'In buskined measures move
'Pale Grief and pleasing Pain,
'With Horror, Tyrant of the throbbing breast.
'A Voice, as of the Cherub-Choir,

---

117. Speed, relating an audience given by Queen Elizabeth to Paul Dzialinski, ambassador of Poland, says: "And thus she, lion-like rising, daunted the malapert Orator no less with her stately port and majestical deporture than with the tartness of her princely cheeks."

121. Taliessin, Chief of the Bards, flourished in the VIth Century. His works are still preserved, and his memory held in high veneration among his Countrymen.

Fierce wars and faithful loves shall moralise my song.
Spenser, *Proëme to the Fairy Queen.*

128-130. Shakespeare. 131-132. Milton.

'Gales from blooming Eden bear;
'And distant warblings lessen on my ear,
'That lost in long futurity expire.
'Fond impious Man, think'st thou, yon sanguine cloud,
'Raised by thy breath, has quenched the Orb of day?
'To-morrow he repairs the golden flood,
'And warms the nations with redoubled ray.
'Enough for me. With joy I see
'The different doom our Fates assign.
'Be thine Despair, and sceptred Care,
'To triumph, and to die, are mine.'

He spoke, and headlong from the mountain's height
Deep in the roaring tide he plunged to endless night.

VII.

THE FATAL SISTERS.

AN ODE

(FROM THE NORSE TONGUE)

In the Orcades of Thormodus Torfæus; Hafniæ, 1697; and also in Bartholinus.

Advertisement.—The Author once had thoughts (in concert with a Friend) of giving "the History of English Poetry." In the Introduction to it he meant to have produced some specimens of the Style that reigned in ancient times among the neighbouring nations, or those who had subdued the greater part of this Island, and were our Progenitors; the following three imitations made a part of them. He has long since dropped his design, especially after he heard that it was already in the hands of a Person well qualified to do it justice, both by his taste, and his researches into antiquity.

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133. The succession of Poets after Milton's time.

PREFACE.—In the Eleventh Century, *Sigurd*, Earl of the Orkney Islands, went with a fleet of ships and a considerable body of troops into Ireland, to the assistance of *Sictryg with the silken beard*, who was then making war on his father-in-law *Brian*, king of Dublin: the Earl and all his forces were cut to pieces, and *Sictryg* was in danger of a total defeat; but the enemy had a greater loss by the death of *Brian* their king, who fell in the action. On Christmas Day (the day of the battle), a Native of *Caithness* in Scotland saw at a distance a number of persons on horseback riding full speed towards a hill, and seeming to enter into it. Curiosity led him to follow them, till looking through an opening in the rocks, he saw twelve gigantic figures resembling women: they were all employed about a loom; and as they wove, they sung the following dreadful Song; which, when they had finished, they tore the web into twelve pieces, and (each taking her portion) galloped Six to the North, and as many to the South.

Now the storm begins to lower,
(Haste, the loom of Hell prepare,)
Iron-sleet of arrowy shower
Hurtles in the darkened air.

Glitt'ring lances are the loom,
Where the dusky warp we strain,
Weaving many a soldier's doom,
Orkney's woe, and *Randver's* bane.

---

1. The *Valkyriur* were female Divinities, servants of *Odin* (or *Woden*), in the Gothic mythology. Their name signifies *Chusers of the slain*. They were mounted on swift horses, with drawn swords in their hands; and in the throng of battle selected such as were destined to slaughter, and conducted them to *Valkalla*, the hall of *Odin*, or paradise of the Brave; where they attended the banquet, and served the departed Heroes with horns of mead and ale.

3. How quick they wheeled, and, flying, behind them shot
Sharp sleet of arrowy show'r.
Milton's *Par. Regained*, iii. 323, 324.

4. The noise of battle hurtled in the air.
Shakespeare, *Julius Cæsar*, ii. 2.

See the grisly texture grow,
('Tis of human entrails made)
And the weights, that play below,
Each a gasping Warrior's head.

Shafts for shuttles, dipt in gore,
Shoot the trembling cords along.
Sword, that once a monarch bore,
Keep the tissue close and strong.

Mista black, terrific Maid,
Sangrida, and *Hilda* see,
Join the wayward work to aid;
'Tis the woof of victory.

Ere the ruddy sun be set,
Pikes must shiver, javelins sing,
Blade with clattering buckler meet,
Hauberk crash, and helmet ring.

(Weave the crimson web of war)
Let us go, and let us fly,
Where our friends the conflict share,
Where they triumph, where they die.

As the paths of fate we tread,
Wading through th' ensanguined field,
Gondula, and *Geira*, spread
O'er the youthful King your shield.

We the reins to slaughter give,
Ours to kill, and ours to spare;
Spite of danger he shall live.
(Weave the crimson web of war.)

They, whom once the desert beach
Pent within its bleak domain,
Soon their ample sway shall stretch
O'er the plenty of the plain.

Low the dauntless Earl is laid,
Gored with many a gaping wound;
Fate demands a nobler head;
Soon a King shall bite the ground.

Long his loss shall Eirin weep,
Ne'er again his likeness see;
Long her strains in sorrow steep,
Strains of immortality!

Horror covers all the heath,
Clouds of carnage blot the sun.
Sisters, weave the web of death;
Sisters, cease, the work is done.

Hail the task, and hail the hands!
Songs of joy and triumph sing!
Joy to the victorious bands;
Triumph to the younger King.

Mortal, thou that hear'st the tale,
Learn the tenor of our song.
Scotland, thro' each winding vale
Far and wide the notes prolong.

Sisters, hence with spurs of speed;
Each her thundering faulchion wield;
Each bestride her sable steed.
Hurry, hurry to the field.

VIII.

THE DESCENT OF ODIN.

AN ODE

(FROM THE NORSE TONGUE).

In Bartholinus, de causis contemnendæ mortis; Hafniæ, 1689.

UPROSE the King of Men with speed,
And saddled strait his coal-black steed;
Down the yawning steep he rode,
That leads to HELA'S drear abode.
Him the Dog of Darkness spied,
His shaggy throat he opened wide,
While from his jaws, with carnage filled,
Foam and human gore distilled;
Hoarse he bays with hideous din,
Eyes that glow, and fangs that grin;
And long pursues, with fruitless yell,
The father of the powerful spell.
Onward still his way he takes,
(The groaning earth beneath him shakes,)
Till full before his fearless eyes
The portals nine of hell arise.

Right against the eastern gate,
By the moss-grown pile he sate;
Where long of yore to sleep was laid
The dust of the prophetic Maid.
Facing to the northern clime,
Thrice he traced the runic rhyme:

1. Niflheimr, the hell of the Gothic nations, consisted of nine worlds, to which were devoted all such as died of sickness, old-age, or by any other means than in battle. Over it presided HELA, the Goddess of Death.

Thrice pronounced, in accents dread,
The thrilling verse that wakes the dead;
Till from out the hollow ground
Slowly breathed a sullen sound.

Prophetess. What call unknown, what charms presume
To break the quiet of the tomb?
Who thus afflicts my troubled sprite,
And drags me from the realms of night?
Long on these mould'ring bones have beat
The winter's snow, the summer's heat,
The drenching dews, and driving rain!
Let me, let me sleep again.
Who is he, with voice unblest,
That calls me from the bed of rest?

Odin. A Traveller, to thee unknown,
Is he that calls, a Warrior's son.
Thou the deeds of light shalt know;
Tell me what is done below,
For whom yon glitt'ring board is spread,
Drest for whom yon golden bed.

Pr. Mantling in the goblet see
The pure bev'rage of the bee,
O'er it hangs the shield of gold;
'Tis the drink of *Balder* bold;
Balder's head to death is given.
Pain can reach the Sons of Heaven!
Unwilling I my lips unclose;
Leave me, leave me to repose.

O. Once again my call obey,
Prophetess, arise, and say,
What dangers *Odin's* child await,
Who the author of his fate.

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Pr. Hie thee hence, and boast at home,
That never shall enquirer come
To break my iron-sleep again;
Till *Lok* has burst his tenfold chain.
Never, till substantial Night
Has reassumed her ancient right;
Till wrapped in flames, in ruin hurled,
Sinks the fabric of the world.

IX.

THE TRIUMPHS OF OWEN.

A FRAGMENT.

FROM MR. EVANS' SPECIMENS OF THE WELSH POETRY;

LONDON, 1764.

ADVERTISEMENT.—OWEN succeeded his Father GRIFFIN in the Principality of North Wales, A.D. 1120. This battle was fought near forty years afterwards.

OWEN'S praise demands my song,
OWEN swift, and OWEN strong;
Fairest flower of Roderic's stem,
Gwyneth's shield, and Britain's gem.
He nor heaps his brooded stores,
Nor on all profusely pours;
Lord of every regal art,
Liberal hand, and open heart.

---

90. *Lok* is the evil Being, who continues in chains till the *Twilight of the Gods* approaches; when he shall break his bonds; the human race, the stars, and sun, shall disappear; the earth sink in the seas, and fire consume the skies; even Odin himself and his kindred-deities shall perish. For a further explanation of this mythology, see Mallet's *Introduction to the History of Denmark*, 1755, quarto.

Big with hosts of mighty name,
Squadrons three against him came;
This the force of Eirin hiding,
Side by side as proudly riding,
On her shadow long and gay
Lochlin ploughs the watry way;
There the Norman sails afar
Catch the winds, and join the war;
Black and huge along they sweep,
Burthens of the angry deep.

Dauntless on his native sands
The Dragon-son of Mona stands;
In glitt'ring arms and glory drest,
High he rears his ruby crest.
There the thund'ring strokes begin,
There the press, and there the din;
Talymalfra's rocky shore
Echoing to the battle's roar.
Where his glowing eye-balls turn,
Thousand banners round him burn;
Where he points his purple spear,
Hasty, hasty rout is there,
Marking with indignant eye
Fear to stop, and shame to fly.
There Confusion, Terror's child,
Conflict fierce, and Ruin wild,
Agony, that pants for breath,
Despair and honourable Death.

* * *

14. Denmark.

20. The red Dragon is the device of Cadwallader, which all his descendants bore on their banners.

X.

ELEGY

WRITTEN IN A

COUNTRY CHURCH-YARD.

THE curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds;

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wand'ring near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a mould'ring heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude Forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
The swallow twitt'ring from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

---

1. . . . squilla di lontano,
Che paia 'l giorno pianger, che si muore.
Dante, *Purgat.* l. 8.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike th' inevitable hour.
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye Proud, impute to these the fault,
If Mem'ry o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where thro' the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honour's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flatt'ry soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;
Hands, that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem, of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood;
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

Th' applause of list'ning senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbad; nor circumscribed alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined;
Forbad to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet ev'n these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhimes and shapeless sculpture decked,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unlettered Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply;
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who to dumb Forgetfulness a prey
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing ling'ring look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;
Ev'n from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who mindful of th' unhonoured Dead
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely Contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
'Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn
'Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
'To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

'There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
'That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
'His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
'And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

'Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
'Mutt'ring his wayward fancies he would rove,
'Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
'Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.

'One morn I missed him on the customed hill,
'Along the heath, and near his fav'rite tree;
'Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
'Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he;

---

92. **Ch' i veggio nel pensier, dolce mio fuoco,**
Fredda una lingua, e due begli occhi chiusi
Rimaner doppo noi pien di faville.—Petrarch, *Son.* 169.

'The next with dirges due in sad array
'Slow thro' the church-way path we saw him borne.
'Approach and read (for thou can'st read) the lay
'Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn.'

THE EPITAPH.

HERE rests his head upon the lap of Earth
A Youth, to Fortune and to Fame unknown.
Fair Science frowned not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy marked him for her own. 120

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heav'n did a recompence as largely send;
He gave to Mis'ry all he had, a tear,
He gained from Heav'n ('twas all he wished) a friend.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose,)
The bosom of his Father and his God.

XI.

A LONG STORY.

In Britain's Isle, no matter where,
An ancient pile of building stands;
The Huntingdons and Hattons there
Employed the power of Fairy hands

To raise the ceiling's fretted height,
Each panel in achievements clothing,
Rich windows that exclude the light,
And passages, that lead to nothing.

---

127 . . . paventosa speme.—Petrarch, *Son.* 114.

Full oft within the spacious walls,
When he had fifty winters o'er him,
My grave Lord-keeper led the brawls;
The seal, and maces, danced before him.

His bushy beard, and shoe-strings green,
His high-crowned hat, and satin-doublet,
Moved the stout heart of England's Queen,
Tho' Pope and Spaniard could not trouble it.

What, in the very first beginning!
Shame of the versifying tribe!
Your Hist'ry whither are you spinning?
Can you do nothing but describe?

A house there is, (and that's enough)
From whence one fatal morning issues
A brace of warriors, not in buff,
But rustling in their silks and tissues.

The first came cap-a-pie from France
Her conqu'ring destiny fulfilling,
Whom meaner beauties eye askance,
And vainly ape her art of killing.

The other Amazon kind Heaven
Had armed with spirit, wit, and satire;
But Cobham had the polish given,
And tipped her arrows with good-nature.

To celebrate her eyes, her air——
Coarse panegyrics would but teaze her.
Melissa is her Nom de Guerre.
Alas, who would not wish to please her!

With bonnet blue and capucine,
And aprons long they hid their armour,
And veiled their weapons bright and keen
In pity to the country-farmer.

Fame, in the shape of Mr. Purt,
(By this time all the parish know it)
Had told that thereabouts there lurked
A wicked Imp they call a Poet,

Who prowled the country far and near,
Bewitched the children of the peasants,
Dried up the cows, and lamed the deer,
And sucked the eggs, and killed the pheasants.

My Lady heard their joint petition,
Swore by her coronet and ermine,
She'd issue out her high commission
To rid the manor of such vermin.

The Heroines undertook the task,
Thro' lanes unknown, o'er stiles they ventured,
Rapped at the door, nor stayed to ask,
But bounce into the parlour entered.

The trembling family they daunt,
They flirt, they sing, they laugh, they tattle,
Rummage his Mother, pinch his Aunt,
And up stairs in a whirlwind rattle.

Each hole and cupboard they explore,
Each creek and cranny of his chamber,
Run hurry-skurry round the floor,
And o'er the bed and tester clamber;

Into the drawers and china pry,
Papers and books, a huge imbroglio!
Under a tea-cup he might lie,
Or creased, like dogs-ears, in a folio.

On the first marching of the troops,
The Muses, hopeless of his pardon,
Conveyed him underneath their hoops
To a small closet in the garden.

So Rumor says. (Who will, believe.)
  But that they left the door a-jar,
Where, safe and laughing in his sleeve,
  He heard the distant din of war.

Short was his joy. He little knew
  The power of Magic was no fable;
Out of the window, whisk, they flew,
  But left a spell upon the table.

The words too eager to unriddle,
  The Poet felt a strange disorder;
Transparent birdlime formed the middle,
  And chains invisible the border.

So cunning was the apparatus,
  The powerful pothooks did so move him,
That, will he, nill he, to the Great-house
  He went, as if the Devil drove him.

Yet on his way (no sign of grace,
  For folks in fear are apt to pray)
To Phœbus he preferred his case,
  And begged his aid that dreadful day.

The godhead would have backed his quarrel,
  But, with a blush on recollection,
Owned that his quiver and his laurel
  'Gainst four such eyes were no protection.

The Court was sate, the Culprit there,
  Forth from their gloomy mansions creeping
The lady *Janes* and *Joans* repair,
  And from the gallery stand peeping;

Such as in silence of the night
  Come (sweep) along some winding entry
(*Styack* has often seen the sight),
  Or at the chapel-door stand sentry;

In peakèd hoods and mantles tarnished,
  Sour visages, enough to scare ye,
High Dames of honour once, that garnished
  The drawing-room of fierce Queen Mary!

The Peeress comes. The audience stare,
  And doff their hats with due submission;
She curtsies, as she takes her chair,
  To all the people of condition.

The Bard, with many an artful fib,
  Had in imagination fenced him,
Disproved the arguments of Squib,
  And all that Groom could urge against him.

But soon his rhetoric forsook him,
  When he the solemn hall had seen;
A sudden fit of ague shook him,
  He stood as mute as poor *Macleane.*

Yet something he was heard to mutter,
  "How in the park beneath an old-tree
(Without design to hurt the butter,
  Or any malice to the poultry,)

"He once or twice had penned a sonnet;
  Yet hoped that he might save his bacon;
Numbers would give their oaths upon it,
  He ne'er was for a conj'rer taken."

The ghostly Prudes with hagged face
  Already had condemned the sinner.
My Lady rose, and with a grace——
  She smiled, and bid him come to dinner.

---

115. Groom of the Chambers. 116. The Steward.
120. A famous highwayman hanged the week before.

"Jesu-Maria! Madam Bridget,
  Why, what can the Viscountess mean?"
(Cried the square-hoods in woful fidget)
  "The times are altered quite and clean!

"Decorum's turned to mere civility;
  Her air and all her manners show it.
Commend me to her affability!
  Speak to a Commoner and Poet!"

[Here 500 Stanzas are lost.]

And so God save our noble King,
  And guard us from long-winded lubbers,
That to eternity would sing,
  And keep my Lady from her rubbers.

XII.

ODE FOR MUSIC

AT THE INSTALLATION OF THE CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE, 1769.

AIR.

"HENCE, avaunt, ('tis holy ground)
  Comus, and his midnight crew,
And Ignorance with looks profound,
  And dreaming Sloth of pallid hue,
Mad Sedition's cry profane,
Servitude that hugs her chain,
Nor in these consecrated bowers
Let painted Flatt'ry hide her serpent-train in flower. —

CHORUS.

Nor Envy base, nor creeping Gain,
Dare the Muse's walk to stain,
While bright-eyed Science watches round;
Hence, away, 'tis holy ground!"

RECITATIVE.

From yonder realms of empyrean day
  Bursts on my ear th' indignant lay;
There sit the sainted Sage, the Bard divine,
  The few, whom Genius gave to shine
Through every unborn age, and undiscovered clime.

ACCOMPANIED.

  Rapt in celestial transport they,
  Yet hither oft a glance from high
  They send of tender sympathy
To bless the place, where on their opening soul
  First the genuine ardour stole.
'Twas Milton struck the deep-toned shell,
And, as the choral warblings round him swell,
Meek Newton's self bends from his state sublime,
And nods his hoary head, and listens to the rhyme.

AIR.

  "Ye brown o'er-arching groves,
  That Contemplation loves,
Where willowy Camus lingers with delight!
  Oft at the blush of dawn
  I trod your level lawn,
Oft wooed the gleam of Cynthia silver-bright
In cloisters dim, far from the haunts of Folly,
With Freedom by my side, and soft-eyed Melancholy."

RECITATIVE.

But hark! the portals sound, and pacing forth,
  With solemn steps and slow,
High potentates, and dames of royal birth,

And mitred fathers in long order go;
Great Edward with the lilies on his brow
From haughty Gallia torn,
And sad Chatillon, on her bridal morn
That wept her bleeding Love, and princely Clare,
And Anjou's Heroine, and the paler Rose,
The rival of her crown and of her woes,
And either Henry there,
The murthered saint, and the majestic lord,
That broke the bonds of Rome.

ACCOMPANIED.

(Their tears, their little triumphs o'er,
Their human passions now no more,
Save Charity, that glows beyond the tomb.)
All that on Granta's fruitful plain
Rich streams of regal bounty poured,
And bad these awful fanes and turrets rise,
To hail their Fitzroy's festal morning come;
And thus they speak in soft accord
The liquid language of the skies:—

QUARTETTO.

"What is grandeur, what is power?
Heavier toil, superior pain.
What the bright reward we gain?
The grateful memory of the good.
Sweet is the breath of vernal shower,
The bee's collected treasures sweet,
Sweet music's melting fall, but sweeter yet
The still small voice of gratitude."

RECITATIVE.

Foremost and leaning from her golden cloud
The venerable Margaret see!
"Welcome, my noble son," (she cries aloud)
"To this, thy kindred train, and me;

Pleased in thy lineaments we trace
A Tudor's fire, a Beaufort's grace."

AIR.

"Thy liberal heart, thy judging eye,
The flower unheeded shall descry,
And bid it round heaven's altars shed
The fragrance of its blushing head;
Shall raise from earth the latent gem
To glitter on the diadem."

RECITATIVE.

"Lo! Granta waits to lead her blooming band,
Not obvious, not obtrusive, she
No vulgar praise, no venal incense flings;
Nor dares with courtly tongue refined
Profane thy inborn royalty of mind;
She reveres herself and thee.
With modest pride to grace thy youthful brow,
The laureate wreath, that Cecil wore, she brings,
And to thy just, thy gentle hand
Submits the fasces of her sway,
While spirits blest above and men below
Join with glad voice the loud symphonious lay."

GRAND CHORUS.

"Through the wild waves as they roar,
With watchful eye and dauntless mien
Thy steady course of honor keep,
Nor fear the rocks, nor seek the shore;
The Star of Brunswick smiles serene,
And gilds the horrors of the deep."

POSTHUMOUS POEMS.

XIII.

SONNET

ON THE DEATH OF RICHARD WEST.

In vain to me the smiling Mornings shine,
And reddening Phœbus lifts his golden fire;
The birds in vain their amorous descant join;
Or cheerful fields resume their green attire;
These ears, alas! for other notes repine,
A different object do these eyes require;
My lonely anguish melts no heart but mine;
And in my breast the imperfect joys expire.
Yet Morning smiles the busy race to cheer,
And new-born pleasure brings to happier men;
The fields to all their wonted tribute bear;
To warm their little loves the birds complain;
I fruitless mourn to him that cannot hear,
And weep the more because I weep in vain.

At Stoke, Aug. 1742.

XIV.

STANZAS TO MR. BENTLEY.

In silent gaze the tuneful choir among,
  Half pleased, half blushing, let the Muse admire,
While Bentley leads her sister-art along,
  And bids the pencil answer to the lyre.

See, in their course, each transitory thought
  Fixed by his touch a lasting essence take;
Each dream, in fancy's airy colouring wrought,
  To local symmetry and life awake!

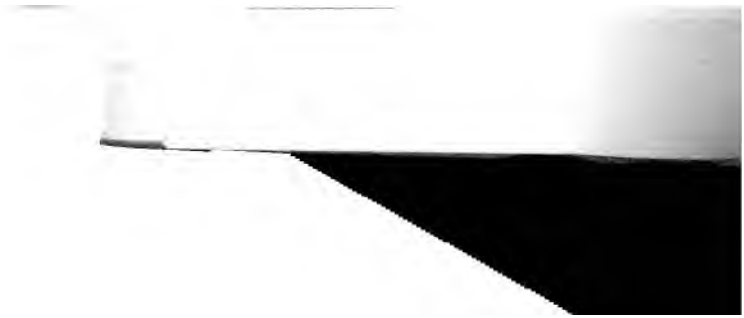
The tardy rhymes that used to linger on,
  To censure cold, and negligent of fame,
In swifter measures animated run,
  And catch a lustre from his genuine flame.

Ah! could they catch his strength, his easy grace,
  His quick creation, his unerring line;
The energy of Pope they might efface,
  And Dryden's harmony submit to mine.

But not to one in this benighted age
  Is that diviner inspiration given,
That burns in Shakespeare's or in Milton's page,
  The pomp and prodigality of heaven.

As, when conspiring in the diamond's blaze,
  The meaner gems, that singly charm the sight,
Together dart their intermingled rays,
  And dazzle with a luxury of light.

Enough for me, if to some feeling breast
  My lines a secret sympathy . .
And as their pleasing influence . .
  A sigh of soft reflection . . .



XV.

ODE ON THE PLEASURE ARISING FROM VICISSITUDE.

A FRAGMENT.

Now the golden Morn aloft
  Waves her dew-bespangled wing,
With vermeil cheek and whisper soft
  She woos the tardy spring;
Till April starts, and calls around
The sleeping fragrance from the ground,
And lightly o'er the living scene
Scatters his freshest, tenderest green.

New-born flocks, in rustic dance,
  Frisking ply their feeble feet;
Forgetful of their wintry trance
  The birds his presence greet;
But chief the sky-lark warbles high
His trembling thrilling ecstasy;
And, lessening from the dazzled sight,
Melts into air and liquid light.

Rise my soul! on wings of fire,
  Rise the rapturous choir among;
Hark! 'tis Nature strikes the lyre,
  And leads the general song.

* * *

Yesterday the sullen year
  Saw the snowy whirlwind fly;
Mute was the music of the air,
  The herd stood drooping by;

Their raptures now that wildly flow
No yesterday nor morrow know;
'Tis man alone that joy descries
With forward and reverted eyes.

Smiles on past Misfortune's brow
Soft Reflection's hand can trace;
And o'er the cheek of Sorrow throw
A melancholy grace;
While Hope prolongs our happier hour,
Or deepest shades, that dimly lower
And blacken round our weary way,
Gilds with a gleam of distant day.

Still, where rosy Pleasure leads,
See a kindred Grief pursue;
Behind the steps that Misery treads,
Approaching Comfort view;
The hues of Bliss more brightly glow,
Chastised by sabler tints of woe;
And blended form, with artful strife,
The strength and harmony of Life.

See the Wretch, that long has tost
On the thorny bed of Pain,
At length repair his vigour lost,
And breathe and walk again;
The meanest flowret of the vale,
The simplest note that swells the gale,
The common Sun, the air, the skies,
To him are opening Paradise.

Humble Quiet builds her cell,
Near the source whence Pleasure flows;
She eyes the clear crystalline well,
And tastes it as it goes.

* * *

XVI.

EPITAPH ON MRS. CLARKE.

Lo! where this silent marble weeps,
A Friend, a Wife, a Mother sleeps;
A heart, within whose sacred cell
The peaceful virtues loved to dwell.
Affection warm, and faith sincere,
And soft humanity were there.
In agony, in death resigned,
She felt the wound she left behind,
Her infant image here below
Sits smiling on a father's woe;
Whom what awaits, while yet he strays
Along the lonely vale of days?
A pang, to secret sorrow dear,
A sigh, an unavailing tear;
Till time shall every grief remove,
With life, with memory, and with love.

XVII.

EPITAPH ON A CHILD.

HERE freed from pain, secure from misery, lies
A Child, the darling of his parents' eyes;
A gentler lamb ne'er sported on the plain,
A fairer flower will never bloom again!
Few were the days allotted to his breath;
Here let him sleep in peace his night of death.

SKETC

WRITTEN IN 17(

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XX.

THE DEATH OF HOEL.

AN ODE

(FROM THE WELSH).

Had I but the torrent's might,
With headlong rage and wild affright
Upon Deïra's squadrons hurled,
To rush, and sweep them from the world!

Too, too secure in youthful pride,
By them my friend, my Hoel, died,
Great Cian's son; of Madoc old
He asked no heaps of hoarded gold;
Alone in nature's wealth arrayed,
He asked and had the lovely maid.

To Cattraeth's vale in glitt'ring row
Thrice two hundred warriors go;
Every warrior's manly neck
Chains of regal honour deck,
Wreathed in many a golden link;
From the golden cup they drink
Nectar that the bees produce,
Or the grape's ecstatic juice.
Flushed with mirth and hope they burn;
But none from Cattraeth's vale return,
Save Aëron brave, and Conan strong,
(Bursting through the bloody throng)
And I, the meanest of them all,
That live to weep and sing their fall.

XXI.

IMITATIONS FROM THE WELSH.

Have ye seen the tusky boar,
Or the bull, with sullen roar,
On surrounding foes advance?
So Caràdoc bore his lance.

. . . . .

Conan's name, my lay, rehearse,
Build to him the lofty verse,
Sacred tribute of the bard,
Verse, the hero's sole reward.
As the flame's devouring force;
As the whirlwind in its course;
As the thunder's fiery stroke,
Glancing on the shivered oak;
Did the sword of Conan mow
The crimson harvest of the foe.

XXII.

VERSES FROM WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

TO MRS. ANNE,

REGULAR SERVANT TO THE REV. MR. PRECENTOR OF YORK.

A moment's patience, gentle Mistress Anne;
(But stint your clack for sweet St. Charitie)
'Tis Willy begs, once a right proper man,
Though now a book, and interleaved you see.

Much have I borne from cankered critic's spite,
From fumbling baronets, and poets small,
Pert barristers, and parsons nothing bright,
But what awaits me now is worst of all.

'Tis true, our master's temper natural
  Was fashioned fair in meek and dove-like guise;
But may not honey's self be turned to gall
  By residence, by marriage, and sore eyes?

If then he wreak on me his wicked will,
  Steal to his closet at the hour of prayer;
And (when thou hear'st the organ piping shrill)
  Grease his best pen, and all he scribbles, tear.

Better to bottom tarts and cheesecakes nice,
  Better the roast meat from the fire to save,
Better be twisted into caps for spice,
  Than thus be patched and cobbled in one's grave.

So York shall taste what Clouet never knew,
  So from our works sublimer fumes shall rise;
While Nancy earns the praise to Shakespeare due,
  For glorious puddings and immortal pies.

XXIII.

AMATORY LINES.

With beauty, with pleasure surrounded, to languish,—
To weep without knowing the cause of my anguish;
To start from short slumbers, and wish for the morning,—
To close my dull eyes when I see it returning;
Sighs sudden and frequent, looks ever dejected,—
Words that steal from my tongue, by no meaning connected!
Ah! say, fellow-swains, how these symptoms befell me?
They smile, but reply not;—Sure Delia will tell me!

XXIV.

SONG.

THYRSIS, when we parted, swore
  Ere the spring he would return—
Ah! what means yon violet flower!
  And the buds that deck the thorn!
'Twas the lark that upward sprung!
'Twas the nightingale that sung!

Idle notes! untimely green!
  Why this unavailing haste?
Western gales and skies serene
  Speak not always winter past.
Cease, my doubts, my fears to move,
Spare the honour of my love.

XXV.

COUPLET ABOUT BIRDS.

THERE pipes the woodlark, and the song-thrush there
Scatters his loose notes in the waste of air.

NOTES.

I.—ODE ON THE SPRING.

THIS *Ode* was written at Stoke in June, 1742, and sent by Gray to his school friend, West, at Hatfield in Hertfordshire, but was returned as West had died on the first of the month.

A copy exists in Gray's handwriting among the Stonehewer MSS. at Pembroke College, entitled "Noon-tide, an Ode." At the foot, Gray has written:—"The beginning of June 1742, sent to Fav.: not knowing he was then dead." Favonius was Gray's name for West. A similar entry is made in his common-place book, where the Ode is transcribed.

It was first published in 1748 in the second volume of Dodsley's *Collection of Poems by Several Hands*, under the title of *Ode*, and without the author's name; it next appeared as the first poem in the *Designs by Mr. Bentley for Six Poems by Mr. T. Gray*, published in 1753, still called merely *Ode*. The notes were first added by Gray in the edition of 1768.

Mitford says this Ode is formed on Horace's Ode, *Ad Sestium*, i. 4; but Gray seems to have been fresh from Milton and Green,—the moral he says is from the latter, and observe how many words and expressions are from Milton.

1. **the rosy-bosomed Hours.** The Hours, in the old Homeric mythology, were the goddesses of the seasons, the course of which was symbolically represented by the 'dance of the Hours.' They are often spoken of along with Venus and the Graces. There were three Horæ, corresponding with the three seasons of the ancients, Spring, Summer and Winter. In art they are represented as blooming maidens, bearing the products of the seasons. There are three references to the Hours in Milton's poetry, all in connection with Spring:—

"While the jolly Hours lead on propitious May."
Sonnet. To the Nightingale.

"Along the crisped shades and towers,
Revels the spruce and jocund Spring,
The Graces and the *rosy-bosomed Hours*,
Thither all their bounties bring."—*Comus*, 984-987.

"Airs, vernal airs,
Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune
The trembling leaves, while universal Pan
Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance
Led on the eternal Spring."—*Par. Lost*, iv. 264-268.

Rosy-bosomed may be either 'with bosoms full of roses,' like 'rosy-crowned,' *Progress of Poesy*, 28, or 'with rosy bosoms' like 'rosy-fingered.'

2. **Venus**, the goddess of love, was regarded as the source of creation and beauty. The Hours were of her train, and adorned her as she rose from the sea. **Train**; see *Hymn to Adversity*, 43.

3. **Disclose**, unclose, open; an old sense, occurs in Shakespeare, Bacon, Milton, etc.

4. **Purple year.** A classical expression, meaning the bright and gay season. *Purpureus* was applied by the Latin poets to what was bright-coloured, to even the whiteness of swans (Horace, *Odes*, iv. 1); and Vergil has the expression 'ver purpureum,' *Æneid*, ix. 40, from which no doubt Pope and Gray took the 'purple year.'

"And lavish Nature paints the *purple* year."
Pastoral, i. 28.

And cf. *Lycidas*, 140—

"That on the green turf suck the honied showers,
And *purple* all the ground with vernal flowers."

5. **The Attic warbler,** the nightingale. The neighbourhood of Athens abounded with nightingales, reference to which is made by Sophocles, and connected with this fact is the fable that Philomela, the daughter of Pandion, king of Attica, was turned into a nightingale. Gray had in mind the well-known description of Athens in *Paradise Regained*:—

"Plato's retirement, where the *Attic bird*
Trills her thick-*warbled* notes the summer long."—iv. 245.

pours her throat. *Throat* is used by metonymy for 'song from her throat.' It is the throat of birds that poets generally speak of when they refer to their singing.

"When linnet-like confined, I
With shriller *throat* shall sing."—
Lovelace, *To Althea*.

Keats in his *Ode to a Nightingale* speaks of it as singing "in *full-throated* ease," and "pouring forth her soul"; and Shelley :—

> "Hail to thee, blithe Spirit,
> That from heaven or near it
> Pourest thy full heart."—*To a Skylark.*

Gray's expression is taken from Pope's *Essay on Man* :—

> "Is it for thee the linnet *pours his throat?*"—iii. 33.

7. **harmony**, in apposition with *throat* and *note*.

8-10. The order is—'While cool Zephyrs, whispering pleasure as they fly, fling their gathered fragrance through the clear blue sky.'

12. **broader browner**, broader and browner than elsewhere; or the comparative may convey the idea of increasing in breadth and colour.

13. **rude**. Untrained by art, in its natural state; cf. *Elegy*, 16.

O'er-canopies. In addition to the quotation in Gray's note, cf. :—

> "A bank with ivy canopied."—*Comus*, 543.
>
> "The *beech* shall yield a cool safe canopy."
> Fletcher's *Purple Island.*

glade. An opening in a wood; see *Ode on Eton*, 2.

15. **rushy**. So in Milton :—

> "By the *rushy-fringed* bank."—*Comus*, 890.

17. **reclined**, agrees with *me*, line 16. Gray delighted in retiring from the madding crowd; cf. *Progress of Poesy*, 121, 122; and see his letter to Horace Walpole, September, 1837, describing how he spends his time at his uncle's at Burnham,—his *comfort* being that he has a forest all his own, vale and hill covered with venerable *beeches*,—"at the foot of one of these squats *me* (il penseroso) and there grow to the trunk for a whole morning," reading Vergil, while the timorous hare and the sportive squirrel gambol around.

19, 20. When first published in Dodsley's *Collection* these two lines were :—

> "How low, how indigent the proud,
> How little are the great."

21. **Still**. at rest. Care is personified; the hardworking caretakers, or herdsmen, are resting.

22. **panting**. Gasping after their labours in the field (rather than from the heat, as it is only springtime).

23. **peopled**, full of living things. Cf. Milton and Pope :—

"The gay motes that *people* the sunbeams."
Il Penseroso, 8.

"From the green myriads in the *peopled* air."
Essay on Man.

Yet. The force of *yet* is—although men and other animals are resting the insect world is busy.

24. **The busy murmur.** In the same passage referred to in note on line 5, Milton has :—

"the sound
Of bees' industrious *murmur*."—*Par. Regained*, iv. 247.

glows. A translation of Vergil's well-known phrase "fervet opus," *Georgics*, iv. 169.

25. **insect youth.** The new race of bees and other insects of this year's growth; 'youth' is used like the Lat. *pubes*, for the generation just reaching puberty; Vergil uses *juvcntus* of swarming bees. Cf. maggot-youth in Green's lines quoted below.

26. **the honied spring.** Poetical for the 'flowers which the spring fills with honey.' Dr. Johnson objected (in his criticism on this *Ode*) to the formation of such words as *honied* as a late practice; but *honied* occurs in Shakspere :—

"His sweet and *honeyed* sentences."—*Henry V.* i. 1.

And Gray probably took it from the passage in *Lycidas*, quoted in note on line 4. It occurs twice elsewhere in Milton, "honeyed words," *Samson Agonistes*, 1066, and "the bee with honeyed thigh," *Il Penseroso*, 142.

27. **noon** = noontide air. **liquid** is a frequent epithet of the air in Latin and English poets, meaning clear, transparent.

29. **trim.** An old word for 'dress'; see the *Bard*, 73.

31-40. In a letter to Horace Walpole, written in 1748,* Gray refers to his having taken these ideas from Green. The passage is as follows :—

"I send you a bit of a thing for two reasons; first, because it is of one of your favourites, Mr. M. Green; and next, because I would do justice. The thought on which my second Ode† turns is manifestly stole from hence; not that I knew it at the time, but having seen this many years before, to be sure it im-

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* Wrongly placed by Mitford and Gosse.

† The *Ode on the Spring* was the second of Gray's Odes in Dodsley's *Collection.*

printed itself on my memory, and, forgetting the author, I took it for my own. The subject was the Queen's Hermitage.

"Though yet no palace grace the shore,
To lodge the pair you * should adore,
Nor abbeys great in ruins rise,
Royal equivalents for vice;
Behold a grot in Delphic grove,
The Graces' and the Muses' love,
A temple from vain-glory free;
Whose goddess is Philosophy;
Whose sides such licensed idols † crown
As Superstition would pull down:
The only pilgrimage I know,
That men of sense would choose to go.
Which sweet abode, her wisest choice,
Urania cheers with heavenly voice;
While all the Virtues gather round
To see her consecrate the ground.
If thou, the God with winged feet,
In council talk of this retreat,
And jealous Gods resentment show
At altars raised to men below,
Tell those proud lords of heaven 'tis fit
Their house our heroes should admit.
While each exists (as poets sing)
A lazy, lewd, immortal thing,
They must, or grow in disrepute,
With earth's first commoners recruit.
Needless it is, in terms unskilled,
To praise whatever Boyle shall build.
Needless it is the busts to name
Of men, monopolists of fame;
Four chiefs adorn the modest stone,
For virtue, as for learning known:
The thinking sculpture helps to raise
Deep thoughts, the genii of the place;
To the mind's ear, and inward sight,
There silence speaks, and shade gives light;
While insects from the threshold preach,
And minds disposed to musing teach;
Proud of strong limbs and painted hues,
They perish by the slightest bruise;
Or maladies begun within
Destroy more slow life's frail machine;
From maggot-youth, thro' change of state,

* Speaking to the Thames. † The four busts.

They feel like us the turns of fate;
Some born to creep have lived to fly,
And changed earth's cells for dwellings high:
And some that did their six wings keep,
Before they died, been forced to creep.
They politics, like ours, profess;
The greater prey upon the less.
Some strain on foot huge loads to bring,
Some toil incessant on the wing;
Nor from their vigorous schemes desist
Till death; and then they are never mist.
Some frolic, toil, marry, increase,
Are sick and well, have war and peace;
And broke with age in half a day,
Yield to successors, and away."

33. **And ... and.** Both ... and. **they that creep** etc. The lowly and the ambitious. Pope, *Essay on Man*, has:—

"Of all who blindly *creep*, or sightless soar."—12.

36. **But**, merely.

38. **Brushed** etc., brushed away (and so killed) by some accident. Supply 'either' before this line:—'Either brushed away before their time or enfeebled by old age.'

42. **sportive kind**, men of the world, and gay friends of Gray's, whom he supposes to mockingly reply to his moralizing.

45. Referring to Gray's being unmarried.

47. **painted.** Coloured; frequently applied by the poets to the wings of birds. Cf.:—

"The smaller birds with song
Solaced the woods and spread their *painted* wings,
Till even, nor then the solemn nightingale
Ceased warbling."—*Par. Lost*, vii. 432-436.

49. **Thy sun is set.** The sunshine is the period in which the insects flourish, but that part of *his* life is over.

Compare the following lines from Blackstone's *Farewell to his Muse*, also published in Dodsley's *Collection* in 1748:—

"Thus though my *noon* of life be past,
Yet let my *setting sun*, at last,
Find out the still the rural cell."

50. **We** is emphatic and in contrast with *thy*.

II.—ODE ON THE DEATH OF A FAVOURITE CAT.

THIS Ode was sent in a letter to Horace Walpole, dated March 1, 1747, on the occasion of the death of one of his cats; at the same time, Gray sent a copy of it to Thomas Wharton, describing it, in mock-heroic style, as the 'most noble of my performances latterly.' A third copy in his handwriting exists at Pembroke College. The letter to Walpole is as follows:—

"CAMBRIDGE, *March* 1, 1747.

"As one ought to be particularly careful to avoid blunders in a compliment of condolence, it would be a sensible satisfaction to me (before I testify my sorrow, and the sincere part I take in your misfortune) to know, for certain, who it is I lament. I knew Zara and Selima (Selima, was it? or Fatima?) or rather I knew them both together; for I cannot justly say which was which. Then as to your handsome Cat, the name you distinguish her by, I am no less at a loss, as well knowing one's handsome cat is always the cat one likes best; or, if one be alive and the other dead, it is usually the latter that is the handsomest. Besides, if the point were never so clear, I hope you do not think me so ill-bred or so imprudent as to forfeit all my interest in the survivor; oh no! I would rather seem to mistake, and imagine to be sure it must be the tabby one that had met with this sad accident. Till this affair is a little better determined, you will excuse me if I do not begin to cry:

'Tempus inane peto, requiem, spatiumque doloris.'

Which interval is the more convenient, as it gives time to rejoice with you on your new honours.* This is only a beginning; I reckon next week we shall hear you are a free-mason, or a Gormogon† at least.—Heigh ho! I feel (as you to be sure have done long since) that I have very little to say, at least in prose. Somebody will be the better for it; I do not mean you, but your Cat, feuë Mademoiselle Selime, whom I am about to immortalize for one week or fortnight, as follows:—

[Here followed the Ode.]

There's a poem for you, it is rather too long for an Epitaph."

The Ode was first printed in 1748 in Vol. II. of Dodsley's *Collection of Poems*, and forms the second piece in the 1753 edition of Gray's *Six Poems* and in the subsequent editions.

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* Walpole had been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

† There is a print of Hogarth's with the title, "The Mystery of Masonry brought to light by the Gormogons." See Nicholls's *Life of Hogarth*, and Pope's *Dunciad*, iv. 576.

The drowning of the cat took place in Arlington Street; and, after the death of Gray, Walpole placed the vase on a pedestal at Strawberry Hill, with a label containing the first stanza of the poem. I am indebted to the kindness of Lord Derby for the information that the vase and pedestal were bought at the sale at Strawberry Hill, in 1842, for £42, by the grandfather of the present Earl, and the vase is now in the picture gallery at Lord Derby's seat at Knowsley.

1-6. The exordium of this mock-heroic is in imitation of the opening lines of Dryden's *Alexander's Feast*:—

"'Twas at the royal feast for Persia won
By Philip's warlike son;
Aloft in awful state
The godlike hero sat
On his imperial throne."

The construction may be either, like the Dryden lines, 'It was on the side of a lofty vase (that what I am about to tell happened)'; or, 'It was on the side of a lofty vase that Selima reclining gazed on the lake below.'

Where China's etc. 'On which China vase the full-blown flowers had been painted in blue.' **azure** is derived from the Persian *lajaward*, through the Arabic *azrag*, in which the *l* is dropped, the lapis lazuli. Cf. Lady M. W. Montagu's *Town Eclogues*:—

Where the tall jar erects its stately pride,
With antic shapes in China's azure dyed."

flowers, that blow. Exception was taken by Dr. Johnson to the redundancy of 'that blow,' but not only is redundancy of the kind poetical, but here the expression requires no such defence—'that blow' = 'that are blowing on it,' so that we, as it were, see the flowers in full blow. The same expression occurs in the *Progress of Poesy*, line 5, where also it is not redundant.

When first published, the last three lines of this stanza stood:—

"The pensive Selima reclined,
Demurest of the tabby kind,
Gazed on the lake below."

The punctuation was then correct, but in the next edition Gray transposed lines four and five as they now stand, and retained the comma after *reclined*, thus separating the subject (*Selima*) from its verb by one comma. Stephen Jones was the first (1800) to correct the punctuation by putting a comma after *Selima* also.

Demurest, most grave and quiet; Fr. *de moeurs*, of good manners. L'Estrange (1616-1704) uses 'demure' of a cat. **of the tabby kind**, of the tabby species of cat. *Kind* is used in the same sense as in "sportive kind"—*Ode on the Spring*, 42. **Tabby.** Walpole had two cats, and seems to have written to Gray that

'his handsome cat was dead.' Gray wrote the *Ode*, not knowing which cat it was, but (as he says in the letter in which he sent the *Ode*) he did not wish to appear not to know which cat was dead, so he would imagine 'it must be the tabby one.' A *tabby* cat is one whose coat is brindled, black and grey, like the waves of watered silk. *Tabby* is from Fr. *tabis*, watered silk, from Arabic *attabi*, a part of Bagdad, where it was made.

reclined. A participle; leaning against.

the lake. The whole poem is written in mock-heroic, describing small things by grand terms; the water in the bowl is called a 'lake,' 'the tide,' 'the stream,' 'a gulf,' 'the flood.'

7-12. **Her conscious tail**, etc. Her tail, feeling conscious, showed by its movements her joy at seeing herself in the water. *Conscious* means possessing the faculty of knowing one's own thoughts, and it is here applied to the tail, as it gave expression to the cat's feelings, as if it were itself an animate being.

From line 10 Mr. Gosse argues "she cannot have been a tabby," but a tortoise-shell cat; and is followed by other annotators. Mr. Storr, in his note on line 4, says, "Prove that she was not a tabby." But, since Gray plainly states he intends the *Ode* to refer to the tabby one, why should we suppose that just after speaking of her as 'of the tabby kind,' he forgot that, and now describes her as a tortoise-shell cat because he says her coat vied with the tortoise? Walpole's other cat may have been a tortoise-shell, and therefore Gray would describe this—the handsome one—as vieing with her in beauty, and purring with pleasure at the sight of it. **Tortoise.** A cat, whose coat is of a dark ground striped with yellow, is called a tortoise-shell cat.

13-18. **Still had she gazed**, she would have continued to look at herself.

angel. Angelic, *i.e.* of heavenly beauty.

The Genii, the guardian deities. *Genii* is the plural of the Latin *genius*, a spirit supposed to preside over a man's destiny or a place. For references to it in Milton see *Ode on the Nativity*, 186; *Il Penseroso*, 154; and *Lycidas*, 186. For the derivative meanings consult Webster's *Dictionary*.

Tyrian hue, purple; the best purple known to the ancients was prepared at Tyre from the secretions of the murex, a shell-fish. **to the view** goes with 'betrayed.'

Betrayed, showed underneath. Cf. Vergil and Wordsworth:—

"Aureus ipse, sed in foliis quae plurima circum
Funduntur violæ *sublucet* purpura nigræ."—*Georgics*, iv. 274.

"The coves and secret hollows, through a ray
Of fainter gold, a purple gleam *betray*."—*Evening Walk*.

19-24. **Nymph**, an eighteenth century poetical term for a female; the cat is dignified by this term, and is called '**maid**,' line 25, in keeping with the burlesque nature of the poem.

whisker, object of 'stretched,' here put for mouth or head.

Referring to the proverb, 'A cat loves fish but will not wet her feet,' to which Shakespeare alludes—

> "Letting 'I dare not' wait upon 'I would,
> Like the poor cat i' the adage."—*Macbeth*, i. 7.

31-36. **Eight times**, alluding to the proverbial saying, 'a cat has nine lives,' meaning it is very difficult to kill one; and therefore the poet says that she nearly escaped drowning, eight times putting her head above water. See also the Explanation of the *Designs* in the edition of 1753; reprinted in the new Aldine edition of Gray's Poems edited by me.

watry God, deity presiding over water. To **send**, infinitive depending on **mewed**, which is equivalent to 'prayed.'

Dolphin, referring to the story of Arion, who, when thrown into the sea by the faithless sailors, was saved by a dolphin, which carried him on its back to Corinth. **Nereid**. The Nereids, in Greek mythology, were sea-nymphs, daughters of Nereus, the 'old man of the sea.'

Nor ... nor, neither ... nor. 'Tom' and 'Susan' are probably the names of servants, either the actual names of two of Walpole's servants or invented by Gray; for 'Susan' he first wrote 'Harry.' 'Tom' is called 'cruel' because he did not hear (*i.e.*, attend to) her cries for help.

A Fav'rite has no friend. This is an often-quoted line.

37-42. **From hence ... Know.** From this ... learn. *Hence* means from this, therefore 'from hence,' though common, is incorrect. **undeceived.** No longer ignorant, now that you have heard the result of this nymph's indiscretion.

be with caution bold. Be bold (if you will) but be cautious also. Cf. 'hasten slowly.'

Nor all, that glisters, gold. Like many another phrase or saying adopted by Gray, this has been given greater currency from being in his oft-read poems. It occurs in several old poets before Gray:—

> "But all which shineth as the gold
> Ne is no gold, as I have been it told."
> Chaucer, *Yeman's Tale.*

Mitford quotes it from the *Paradise of Dainty Devices. England's Helicon*, the *Faerie Queene*, etc. It also occurs in Shakespeare and Dryden:—

"All that glisters is not gold."—*Merchant of Venice*, ii. 7.
"All, as they say, that glitters is not gold."—*Hind and Panther.*

VARIOUS READINGS.

5. In the Walpole MS. and in Dodsley's *Collection* (1748) the order of these lines was—

The pensive Selima reclined,
Demurest of the tabby kind.

14. In the Walpole MS. and in the 1748 *Collection*, Two beauteous forms.

24. In the *Collection* of 1748, A foe to fish.

25. *Looks*—in the Wharton MS., eyes.

35. In the Walpole and Wharton MSS. and in the *Collection* of 1748, nor *Harry* heard.

36. In the Walpole MS. and in the *Collection* of 1748, What favourite has a friend!

40. *Tempts.* In the Wharton MS., strikes.

III.—ODE ON A DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON COLLEGE.

IN Gray's MS. at Pembroke College, the title is, *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Windsor and the adjacent Country.* At the foot Gray has written:—"At Stoke, Aug., 1742." The present title was probably suggested by Walpole, who admired the Ode greatly, describing it as 'inimitable.'

Though written in 1742, Gray did not publish this Ode till 1747, and it was the first of his English productions which appeared in print. It was published anonymously, in a folio pamphlet of eight pages, as An Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College. London. Printed for R. Dodsley at Tully's Head in Pall-Mall; and sold by M. Cooper at the Globe in Pater-noster Row, 1747. (Price Sixpence.)

It appeared, still without his name, in Vol. II. of Dodsley's *Collection of Poems* in 1748; and comes third in the *Six Poems* of 1753.

The motto from Menander and the notes were added in 1768. The motto is written in the Pembroke MS. in the margin commencing opposite the sixth stanza, and may be translated thus:—"I am a man,—a sufficient excuse for being miserable."

1-10. **antique.** Ancient; 'antique' is now applied to old-fashioned things, and would not be used of a building. Milton spells it *antic*, and probably Gray took the epithet from the line in *Il Penseroso:* "With *antic pillars* massy proof."

Science. Knowledge in general; used in its primary sense, and not restricted as now; see also *Elegy*, 119.

Her. Because he founded the College. Twice elsewhere Gray

refers to Henry VI.—*The Bard*, 90, and *The Installation Ode*, 46—and speaks of him as 'holy' and a 'saint,' as he was 'near being canonised.'

Whose turf, etc. The Thames wanders among the flowers of the mead, the shade of the grove, and the turf of the lawn. **silver-winding.** Note the irregular formation of this compound.

12-20. **beloved in vain.** Because they do not still afford him the sensations he had as a 'careless' boy; there is also a reference to the recent death of his school friend, West.

once. Formerly. **careless.** Free from care; cf. Lat. *securus*, and the use of 'thoughtless,' line 48.

redolent of. Emitting a smell of; fragrant with. In his querulous remarks on this Ode Dr. Johnson takes exception to this expression, and to his 'supplication to Father Thames,' though he has himself a similar address to a river in *Rasselas;* and Vergil speaks of 'pater Tiberinus.'

21-30. With the apostrophe to Father Thames and what follows compare the following lines from Green's *Grotto*, the poem Gray said he had in mind when writing the *Ode on the Spring*:—

> "*Say, Father Thames*, whose gentle pace
> Gives leave to view what beauties grace
> Your flowery banks, *if you have seen*
> The much-sung grotto of the Queen."

From '**for thou hast seen**' down to '**trace,**' line 24, is parenthetical. **race.** Succession of schoolboys. **trace.** Infin. depending on *seen*. **margent green.** These words are from *Comus:*

> "By slow Meander's *margent green.*"—332.

Margent is now obsolete except in poetry.

Who foremost etc. Say who are the foremost now in swimming in your waters. **which.** What boys. **The captive linnet** etc. A condensed way of saying—Who set traps for the linnet, and having caught them put them in cages? **succeed.** Follow previous generations of schoolboys.

the rolling circle. A poetical phrase for 'the hoop.' It was against this unnatural style of expression, so common in the poetry of the eighteenth century, that Wordsworth protested.

29. In the Pembroke MS. this line runs:—

> "To chase the hoop's elusive speed."

This curious expression occurs in the fragment of a tragedy, *Agrippina*, which Gray had written a few months previously in 1742:—

> "we could not have beguiled
> With more elusive speed the dazzled sight
> Of wakeful jealousy."

the flying ball? Mr. Storr says "not cricket, but trap-bat-and-ball, as appears from Bentley's illustration to the poem," but, though a whole cricket field is not shown, the two boys seem to be playing at cricket; and in a letter to West, 27th May, 1747, Gray refers to old schoolfellows, already statesmen, whom he remembers as "dirty boys playing at cricket."

The notes of interrogation in lines 26, 27 and 30, are in the original editions, and are correct if we treat 'say,' line 21, as intransitive and equivalent to 'Tell me'; but if we make what follows (25-30) objective clauses to 'say,' then the interrogations are wrong, the construction being 'say who now delight,' etc., 'say what progeny succeeds.' See *The Descent of Odin*, 52, 60.

32-40. **Their murm'ring labours ply.** Attend to their lessons, making a murmur (as they read them over). *Murm'ring* refers only to the buzzing sound. **ply**, see *Elegy*, 22.

'Gainst. Towards, for; to be ready for. **graver hours** etc. The time when they will be confined to school, this very restraint rendering their freedom out of school-hours more pleasant.

Some bold etc. Some daring boys venture out beyond the limits of the school compound, and go 'out of bounds,' though they have been forbidden to do so. **reign.** Kingdom, territory; cf. the *Elegy*, 12. **descry.** A word common in Milton in this sense; *e.g. Par. Lost*, i. 290, Galileo uses his telescope 'to descry new lands.' Gray has it again, *Ode for Music*, 72.

Still as. Always, while. **a fearful joy.** A pleasure mixed with fear (lest they should be caught).

41-50. **Less pleasing.** When we gain the object we hope for it does not please as much as we anticipated. Though *pleasing* and *possessd* agree with *hope*, there is an ellipsis of the thing hoped for.

The tear. 'The tear is theirs.' **forgot.** Forgotten, past part. With this compare Moore's *Light of other Days*:—

"The smiles, the tears
Of boyhood's years."

The sunshine of the breast (*i.e.* happiness) is theirs.

buxom literally means easily bended—*bow*, to bend, and *some*. A.S. *bocsum*, Ger. *biegsam*. In old writers it meant pliant, obedient:—"Abraham, as a true servant, fulfilled the Lord's commandment, and for his *buxomness* and truth God sware," etc. —Fox, *Acts and Monuments*. *Buxom* occurs three times in Milton, twice in *Par. Lost*, applied to the air, and in *l'Allegro*:—

"A daughter fair,
So *buxom*, blithe, and debonair."—23.

It is in this latter sense of lively, comely, frolicsome, healthy, that it is now used.

cheer. The primary meaning of *cheer* was the face :—

"In the sweat of thi *cheer* schalt thou eat bread."
—*Wicklif.*

"All fancy-sick she is and pale of *cheer*."
—*Midsummer Night's Dream*, iii. 2.

Then it came to denote the expression of the face or countenance, or to what has the effect of gladdening it—good news, entertainment, etc., cf. *Par. Lost*, vi. 496, *Samson Agonistes*, 1613.

The easy night. Compare *Paradise Lost* :—

"When Adam waked; so customed, for his sleep
Was airy-light from pure digestion bred."—v. 3.

fly. Fly from. *Fly* occurs several times as a transitive in Milton—'to *fly* pain,' *Par. Lost*, iv. 948; '*fly* this cursed place,' *Comus*, 939; '*fly* the Babylonian woe,' *Sonnet* 18.

55-59. **all.** Completely; an adverb. **'em.** This abbreviation of *them*, or perhaps a survival of the O.E. *eom*, is now a vulgarism or only used colloquially, but Gray printed it thus to avoid the unmusical sound of the *d* and *th*; and he has it in *Agrippina* :—"He perchance may heed 'em."

murth'rous. In the Pembroke MS. it is 'griesly,' and 'murtherous' is in the margin. *Murder* was formerly also spelt *murther*, *d* and *th* being in many words interchangeable, *e.g.* burden, burthen, thrill, drill. *Murtherous* is a very expressive form, and suits the rhythm of the line better; he uses it again in the *Ode for Music*, 46.

61-70. **These** and **this**, line 71, **those**, line 75, = some ... others.

Vultures is in apposition with *passions*,—like birds of prey they prey upon the mind. Gray always spells it *vulturs*.

Grim-visaged etc. The expressions are taken from Shakespeare :—

"*Grim-visaged* war."—*Richard III.* i. 1.

"Moody and dull melancholy,
Kinsman to *grim and comfortless despair*."
Comedy of Errors, v. 1.

71-75. **this** ... **those.** Ambition shall tempt this one, the stings of Falsehood and the altered eye of Unkindness shall try those.

82-88. **grisly.** Frightful, gruesome. A. S. *grislic*. It is always spelled 'griesly' by Gray and seems a favourite word with him; it occurs in *The Bard*, 44, *The Fatal Sisters*, 9, and in *Tophet*.

Queen. Death is always masculine in the English poets. Gray may have had 'pallida mors' in his mind, and Hela, the Goddess of Death; see his note on the *Descent of Odin*.

deeper. Used here in the sense of internal. **vitals.** A noun without a singular; cf. 'annals.'

to fill the band. To complete the troop. **Poverty** and **Age** are subjects of 'are seen' understood.

91. **To each his suff'rings.** His own peculiar sufferings fall to each man.

92. **alike** goes with **condemned**, 'all equally condemned.' Lines 96 and 97 should be taken with 95:—'Since sorrow never comes too late, and happiness too swiftly dies, why should they know their fate?' The punctuation here is correct, as would also be a comma after *fate* and a query after *flies*; but some editors have a comma after *flies*.

IV.—HYMN TO ADVERSITY.

In the MS. of this poem at Pembroke College it is called an Ode, and at the foot Gray has written "At Stoke, Aug. 1742."

It was first printed in the edition of 1753 as the fifth of the *Six Poems*, and next appeared in 1755 in Vol. IV. of Dodsley's *Collection of Poems by Several Hands*. In both places, and in Gray's edition of 1768, it is called "Hymn to Adversity," "which title" Mason "dropped for the sake of uniformity in the page"; as he numbers the first eleven pieces in his edition of 1775 Ode I., II., etc.; and several editors have followed him in calling it "Ode to Adversity." Mason and others after him are also wrong in stating that the poem first appeared in Dodsley's *Collection*;—only three volumes were published at first (1748), and in 1755 a second edition of these was issued, with a fourth volume, which opened with the "Elegy," and the "Hymn to Adversity," "by the Same," was the next in the *Collection*; in 1758 the four volumes were reprinted, with a fifth and sixth, Gray's Pindaric Odes being the two last pieces in Vol. VI.*

The motto from Æschylus first appears in the edition of 1768.

1-8. In three places in this stanza Gray borrows from *Paradise Lost*:—

> "The vassals of his anger, when the *scourge*
> Inexorably, and the *torturing hour*,
> Calls us to penance."—ii. 90-92.
>
> "In *adamantine chains* and penal fire."—i. 48.
>
> "Strange horror seize thee, and *pangs unfelt before*."—ii. 703.

adamantine chains occurs in Æschylus, Horace, and several English poets.

* From Mitford's reference to the pages of the edition of 1755, and other allusions in his notes, it would seem that he was not aware that the first three volumes were published in 1748, and he misplaces Gray's letter criticising some of the poems when the *Collection* first appeared.

1. **Daughter of Jove.** Atè, the goddess, in the Greek mythology, who avenges evil deeds by adversity. The translation of the motto from Æschylus is :—"Zeus, who led mortals into the path of understanding, and established the law of 'wisdom by woe.'"

7. **purple.** Clad in purple. From Horace :—

"Purpurei metuunt tyranni."—*Odes*, i. 35.

8. **unpitied and alone.** In the Pembroke MS. :—and misery not thine own.

9, 10. The order is : 'When thy sire first designed to send Virtue, his darling child, on earth.' **designed.** Determined.

11. **Birth.** Infant; lit. 'the thing borne'; cf. 'growth' from 'grow.' Milton uses it in the same sense and spells it *bearth* :

"Help to disburden Nature of her *bearth*."
Par. Lost, ix. 624.

And Gray again in his *Alliance of Education and Government* :—

"As sickly plants betray a niggard earth,
Whose barren bosom starves her generous birth."

12. **bad to form.** Bade her to form. For the omission of the pronoun cf. the *Elegy*, 65, *Par. Lost*, ii. 514, and :—

"Michael bid sound
The archangel trumpet."—vi. 202.

13. **lore.** Lesson, learning; A.S. *learan.* See *Par. Lost*, ii. 815.

With this poetical account of Adversity being the nurse of Virtue, cf. Bacon : "Certainly Virtue is like precious odours, most fragrant when they are incensed [*i.e.* burned] or crushed. For Prosperity doth best discover Vice ; but Adversity doth best discover Virtue."—*Essay V.*

16. **learned to melt**, etc. Cf. Pope's *Elegy*, 44 :—

"So perish all those whose breast ne'er *learned* to glow
For others' good, or *melt* at others' woe."

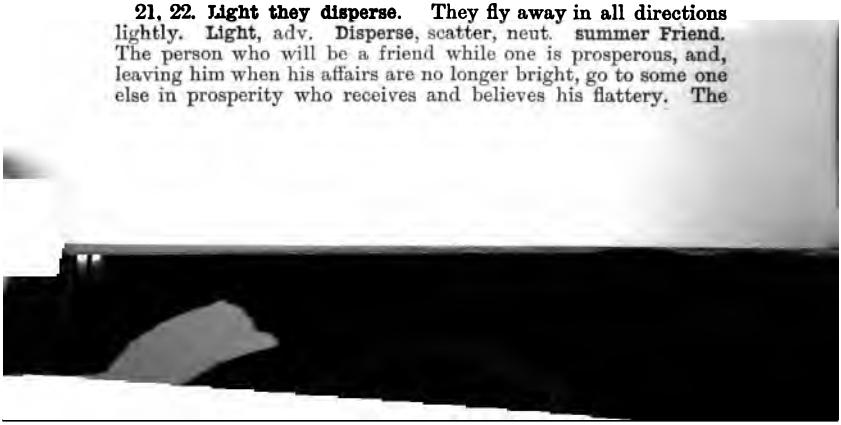
17-20. The order is : 'Folly's idle brood, Laughter, Noise, and Joy, scared at thy terrific frown, fly and leave us,' etc. **Folly's brood.** From Milton :—

"Hence, vain deluding Joys,
The brood of Folly without father bred."
Il Penseroso, i. 2.

20. Mathias quotes from one of Oldham's *Odes* :—

"And know I have not yet the leisure to be good."

21, 22. **Light they disperse.** They fly away in all directions lightly. **Light**, adv. **Disperse**, scatter, neut. **summer Friend.** The person who will be a friend while one is prosperous, and, leaving him when his affairs are no longer bright, go to some one else in prosperity who receives and believes his flattery. The



simile is common in the poets; George Herbert speaks of "summer-friends, flies of estates and sunshine," and see the *Bard*, 69, and the quotation, in the note, from *Agrippina*.

24. **truth.** Troth, allegiance.

27. Almost all editors have a comma after *maid*, but there is none in any of the editions of this Ode printed in Gray's lifetime.

28. **that loves the ground.** That is always looking downwards. The phrase is in Dryden, *Cymon and Iphigenia*:—

> "And stupid eyes *that ever loved the ground*."—57.

And in Milton's address to Melancholy in *Il Penseroso* he says:—

> "Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes,
> Forget thyself to marble, till
> With a sad leaden downward cast
> Thou fix them on the earth as fast."—40-44.

32. In the Pembroke MS. Gray has written ἀγλυκυδακρὺς here.

35. **Gorgon terrors.** The Gorgons were three frightful maidens, named Stheno, Euryale, and Medusa. Instead of hair their heads were covered with hissing serpents; they had wings, brazen claws, and enormous teeth. Medusa's head was so frightful that every one that looked at it was turned into stone. Milton alludes four times to the Gorgons or their 'Gorgonian terrors.'

36. **Nor.** Mitford and some subsequent editors misprint *not*. **the vengeful Band,** the Furies, who took vengeance on the impious, *i.e.*, those who did not perform their duties to God and their fellowmen. He specifies Horror, Despair, Disease, and Poverty, as some of the forms in which this 'vengeful band' appear. Cf. the expressions 'baleful train,' 'murtherous band,' 'grisly troop.'—*Ode on Eton College*.

39. **funeral.** We should now use 'funereal' in this sense of dismal, ill-boding.

43. **philosophic train.** Your followers who are of a 'philosophic mind,' and have learned that 'sweet are the uses of adversity.' See the train named in *Il Penseroso*, 45-55.

45-47. There is probably an allusion here to Walpole's disagreement with Gray, on their travels a year previously, and Gray's regret for it.

Exact, in apposition with 'me' in the previous line; 'exact (accurate) in scanning my own defects.'

48. Teach me to know what others are, and to know that I too am human, and as liable to err as others.

V.—THE PROGRESS OF POESY.

THIS Ode was written at Cambridge in 1754, and in a letter dated 26th December, Gray sent it as an 'Ode in the Greek manner' to Dr. Wharton, observing "If this be as tedious to you as it is grown to me, I shall be sorry that I sent it to you."

In 1757 it was printed along with the *Bard*, but neither with their present title, but merely Ode I. and Ode II. The little quarto volume of twenty-one pages was published on the 8th of August—the first issue of Horace Walpole's printing press—with an engraving of Strawberry Hill, and the following title:—*Odes by Mr. Gray.* *Φωνᾶντα συνετοῖσι.*—Pindar, Olymp. II. Printed at Strawberry Hill, for R. and J. Dodsley in Pall Mall. MDCCLVII. (Price One Shilling.)

There were no notes in the edition of 1757, but they were supplied by Gray in the edition of 1768, who apologized for so doing thus:—*Advertisement.*—When the Author first published this and the following Ode, he was advised, even by his Friends, to subjoin some explanatory Notes, but had too much respect for the understanding of his Readers to take that liberty.

Before reading the Poem it would be well for the student to read the running commentary Gray gives in his notes, which is virtually an analysis of the Ode.

1. Gray quotes (incorrectly) from the Prayer Book version of *Psalm* lvii. 9. **Æolian lyre.** This is equivalent to 'lyre of Pindar.' Æolia extended along the coast of Asia Minor from the Troad to the Hermus. Alcæus and Sappho belonged to Lesbos, an island of the Æolians, and hence one of the chief Greek rhythms was called Æolian. Cf. the following lines from Milton:—

> "There thou shalt hear and learn the secret power
> Of harmony, in tones and numbers hit
> By voice or hand, and various-measured verse,
> Æolian charms and Dorian lyric odes.'—*Par. Reg.* iv. 254.

In a letter to Wharton, dated October 7, 1757, Gray says:—"The *Critical Review* . . . is in raptures, but mistakes the Æolian lyre for the harp of Æolus, and on this pleasant error founds both a compliment and a criticism." In spite of this and Gray's footnote a recent annotator has repeated the wrong interpretation.

2. **rapture.** Inspired strains; *rapture* and *transport* are the Latin equivalents of *ecstasy*, and *transport* is what Gray has in the MS. here.

3. **Helicon's ... springs.** Helicon was a mountain range in Bœotia; in it there were two fountains, Aganippe and Hippocrene, sacred to the Muses, and hence here called *harmonious.*

4. **mazy.** Meandering in an intricate way; it is the adjective form of *maze*, which is thus defined in Blount's *Dictionary of Hard Words* (1670): "An astonishment, sometimes a device like a labyrinth, made in some gardens in manner of a knot with so many intricate turnings, wherein if any one entered it is hard getting out."

5. **that ... blow.** That are in bloom; see *Ode on the Cat*, 3.

7, 10. **Now ... Now.** At one time ... at another.

9. **Ceres' golden reign.** The cornfields and other fields of ripe grain. *Ceres*, the goddess who presided over corn and tillage, hence the adj. 'cereal.' **reign**, realm; cf. *Elegy*, 12, and *Ode on Eton*, 36.

10. **amain.** With main force, with all its might; adv. It occurs frequently in Milton—*Lycidas*, 111, *Paradise Lost*, ii. 165, and 1024.

12. **nodding.** Swaying to and fro; he uses it of the beech in the *Elegy*, 101.

13. **the willing soul.** Cf. Milton's *Vacation Exercise*, 50-52:—

> "While sad Ulysses' soul and all the rest
> Are held with his melodious harmony
> In *willing* chains and sweet captivity."

14. **solemn-breathing.** This compound is taken from Milton; the whole passage in which the following lines occur should be read:—

> "At last a soft and *solemn-breathing* sound
> Rose like a stream of rich distilled perfumes."
> *Comus*, 555.

15. **shell** is here put for lyre, an allusion to the myth of the origin of the instrument, Mercury being said to have made it from the shell of a tortoise. Cf. Collins, *The Passions*:—

> "When Music, heavenly maid, was young,
> The Passions oft to hear her shell
> Thronged around her magic cell."

17. **Thracia's hills.** Thrace was supposed to be the home of Ares, or Mars, the god of war; owing probably to the wildness of the inhabitants. Cf. Chaucer, *The Knight's Tale*:—

> "O strong god that in the regnes cold
> Of Thrace honoured art and lord yhold."

18. **car.** The war-chariot.

19. **at thy command.** "The allusion seems to be to Orpheus, who is supposed to have lived in Thrace, and to have occupied himself, after the Argonautic expedition, with attempting to civilize his wild fellow-countrymen."—Gosse.

20, 21. **Perching** agrees with *king*. **the feathered king**, the

eagle, the 'bird of Jove,' *Par. Lost*, xi. 185. This expression occurs in verses attributed to Shakespeare:—

"Every fowl of tyrant wing,
Save the eagle, *feathered king.*"

22. **flagging wing.** Horace Walpole, in describing the famous Boccapadugli eagle, of Greek sculpture, says "Mr. Gray has drawn the *flagging wing.*"

23, 24. **Quenched** is an unusual word to apply to 'terror' and 'lightnings'; cf. *Elegy*, 70. **The terror of his beak.** His terrible beak.

25. **the voice**, singing.

26. **Tempered**, regulated by, in time with. See *Lycidas*, 32.

27. **Idalia.** Idalium, in Cyprus, where there was a temple sacred to the worship of Venus. She was also called **Cytherea**, from Cythera, an island off the coast of Laconia, where she was said to have landed when she rose from the foam of the sea. **velvet green.** The green grass-plot as soft as velvet; *green* is a noun, and *velvet*, an adj. Gray prints *velvet-green*, and has several similar compounds, *e.g.* 'desert-beach,' *Fatal Sisters*, 37. Dr. Johnson objected to the use of *velvet*, on the ground that Nature should not borrow from Art; but Gray follows Shakespeare and other poets:—

"Make boot upon the summer's *velvet buds.*"—*Henry V.* i. 2.

28. **rosy-crownèd Loves.** Cupids crowned or garlanded with roses.

30. **antic.** Sportive, quaint; another form of antique, an old-fashioned thing being antique; 'antic' was an old-fashioned dance.

31. **frolic** is here an adjective, as also in the two places it occurs in Milton, *Comus*, 59, and *l'Allegro*, 18:—

"The *frolic* wind that breathes the spring."

And Tennyson has "with a *frolic* welcome" in *Ulysses.*

35. **many-twinkling.** An incorrectly formed compound; but it occurs in Thomson's *Spring* (1728):—

"Or rustling turn the *many-twinkling* leaves
Of aspen tall."

The translation of the line Gray quotes from Homer is, 'he gazed on the flashing of the feet, and marvelled in his mind.'

38. **sublime.** Uplifted; in its Latin sense; see *Par. Lost*, ii. 528; iii. 72; vi. 771.

39. **gliding** and **easy** indicate her graceful movements. **wins her way.** The phrase is in *Paradise Lost*, ii. 1016:—

". . . on all sides round
Environed, wins his way."

The translation of the lines from Phrynichus is, 'the light of

love gleams upon her purple cheek.' Vergil has 'lumenque juventæ purpureum.'—*Æneid*, i. 590.

46. **fond.** Foolish. In Peter Levin's *Manipulus Vocabulorum* (1570) *fond* is translated *stolidus*, foolish ; and in Chaucer and early writers *fonne* is a fool. Fond frequently occurs in the sense of foolish in the Bible, Milton, *Par. Lost*, iii. 470, vi. 90, viii. 195, and Shakespeare :—

"I do wonder,
Thou naughty gaoler, that thou art so *fond*
To come abroad with him at his request."
Merchant of Venice, iii. 3.

Cf. the changes of meaning in the word *dote*, and *fond* as a verb :—

"And I, poor monster, *fond* as much on him,
And she, mistaken, seems to *dote* on me."
Twelfth Night, ii. 2.

The fond complaint. The foolish complaint is that life consists only of ills—such as Labour, Penury, etc.

47. **justify** etc. The expression is borrowed from Milton, *Par. Lost*, i. 26. The argument is : 'Just as Jove causes the bright sun to dispel the night, so he gave the Muse of Song in compensation for the ills that man is heir to.'

50. **boding.** Ominous, ill-omened ; *boding* has usually a qualifying word with it,—'boding good,' 'boding mischief' ; derived from A.S. *bodian*, to tell. See *Descent of Odin*, 84.

51. **He gives.** He permits ; a Latinism. See *Ode for Music*, 16.

Mitford noted that 'the couplet from Cowley was wrongly quoted by Gray, and so continued by his different editors' ; but he himself did not give the lines correctly. They are :—

"One would have thought 't had heard the Morning crow,
Or seen her well-appointed Star
Come marching up the Eastern Hill afar."—*Brutus, an Ode.*

Gray was fond of reproducing a word or phrase that pleased him ; in his Journal of his Tour in the Lake District he writes under Oct. 4, 1769 :—"While I was here a little shower fell, red clouds came marching up the hills from the east, a part of a bright rainbow seemed to rise along the side of Castle-hill."

53. **Hyperion.** The sun ; in the Grecian mythology Hyperion was a Titan and the father of Helios (the Sun), Selene (the Moon), and Eos (the Dawn) ; but the name was often applied to the sun itself. Here, and in Shakespeare, Keats, and some other English poets, the accent is on the second syllable, but the correct pronunciation is Hyperĭon ; these three great poets have, however, accustomed us to say Hypérion. Gray has it again :—

"Thrice hath Hyperion rolled his annual race."
Hymn to Ignorance, 11.

spy. See, espy; without the idea of secrecy now always attaching to it; see *Par. Lost*, iv. 1005. **of war.** Equivalent to 'of armed men in battle array'; the rays of the sun being compared to the spears and other shining weapons of an army. Mr. Rolfe quotes from Lowell:—

> "'Tis from these heights alone your eyes
> The advancing spears of day can see,
> Which o'er the eastern hill-tops rise,
> To break your long captivity."—*Above and Below.*

In *Agrippina* Gray has "the glittering front of war." Twice elsewhere he rhymes *far* with *war*:—

> "Oft o'er the trembling nations from afar,
> Has Scythia breathed the living cloud of war."
> *Education and Government.*

> "When blazing 'gainst the sun it shines from far,
> And, clashed, rebellows with the din of war."
> *Translation from Statius.*

54. **beyond the solar road.** In the northern regions, where the sun is so seldom seen. Gray refers to Vergil and Petrarch. Dryden and Pope had also borrowed the expression from the *Æneid.*

> "Out of the solar-walk, and heaven's highway."
> Dryden, *Threnoida Augustalis.*

55. **shaggy forms.** People clad in fur skins and rough garments. Gray uses *shaggy* twice elsewhere in the sense of rough; see *The Bard*, 11, and *The Descent of Odin*, 6.

56. **The Muse** etc. Poetry and song have lightened the weariness of the long dark days. Gray was the first in this country to appreciate the Icelandic poetry. **has broke.** An incorrect form, common in the eighteenth century; cf. 'Elegy *wrote* in a Country Churchyard,'—the title of the first edition.

59. **laid.** Placed, lying; agreeing with **Youth.**

60-62. **repeat** ... **Their Chiefs** etc. Celebrate in verse, sing songs of their chiefs and their sweethearts. **feather-cinctured.** A compound formed from Milton's words:—

> "Columbus found the American so girt
> With *feathered cincture.*"—*Par. Lost*, ix. 1117.

Loves. An abstract noun used as a concrete; their sweethearts. **dusky.** Referring to the colour of the inhabitants; in *Education and Government* he speaks of the '*dusky* people' of Egypt.

64, 65. The subjects of **pursue** are Glory, Shame, Mind, and flame. That is, all these are sung of in Poetry, and inspire it. Wakefield observes that this use of the verb plural after the first substantive is in Pindar's manner. **generous,** lit. well-born; cf. 'in-born royalty of mind.'—*Ode at the Installation.* **Shame,** a

sense of shame, a feeling of honour; Lat. *pudor*. **Th' unconquerable Mind.** Cf. Milton's expression: "the unconquerable will."—*Par. Lost*, i. 106.

"I cannot help remarking," says Dugald Stuart, *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, "the effect of the solemn and uniform flow of verse in this exquisite stanza, in retarding the pronunciation of the reader, so as to arrest his attention to every successive picture, till it has time to produce its proper impression."

66. **Delphi.** A small town in Phocis, celebrated for its oracle, and situated on the side of Mount Parnassus. It was one of the chief shrines of Apollo, the god of Song.

67. **crown**, cover like a crown; cf. *Ode on Eton*, 2.

68. **Ilissus.** A small river rising in Mount Hymettus, and flowing past Athens. See *Paradise Regained*, iv. 249.

69. **Mæander.** The Mæander, proverbial for its wandering course, flowed through Phrygia, into the Icarian Sea. Miletus, on the Mæander, was the birthplace of Thales and other Greek philosophers; but the reference is probably suggested by Milton's lines:—

"Sweet Echo, sweetest nymph, that livest unseen,
Within thy airy shell;
By slow Mæander's margent green."—*Comus*, 230.

With lines 66-72, compare Byron's:—

"The Isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece,
Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
Where grew the arts of war and peace,
Where Delos rose and Phœbus sprung!
Eternal summer gilds them yet,
But all, except their Sun, is set."—*Don Juan*.

73. **each old poetic Mountain.** In the *Christian Year* (third Sunday in Lent) Keble refers to these words in a note to his lines:—

"Fly from the 'old poetic' fields,
Ye Paynim shadows dark!
Immortal Greece, dear land of glorious lays."

Those who are familiar with Gray's letters will remember the one to West, where he says:—"In our little journey up to the Grande Chartreuse, I do not remember to have gone ten paces without an exclamation that there was no restraining; not a precipice, not a torrent, not a cliff, but is pregnant with religion and poetry."—November 16, 1739.

77. **the Nine**, the Muses. **sad**,—because leaving Greece. **in Greece's evil hour.** At the time of her downfall. The last of the Greek poets flourished in the third century B.C. In 146 B.C. Greece became a Roman province.

78, 81. **the Latian plains** and **Latium.** Latium was the plain

through which the Tiber flowed; here put for Rome and Italy, and used as Gray had in mind the almost proverbial saying of Horace:—

"Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit, et artes
Intulit agresti Latio."

79. **Alike they scorn.** The Muses scorn the luxury of imperial Rome as much as the servile degeneracy of Greece.

80. **revels in her chains.** Gray has a similar phrase in the *Ode at the Installation*, line 6.

83. **Far from the sun** etc. In the more northern clime of England—far from sunny Italy.

84. **thy.** The address to Albion is continued. **green lap.** This phrase is in Milton's *Song on May Morning*:—

"The flowery May, who from her *green lap* throws
The yellow cowslip, and the pale primrose."

Nature's Darling. Mitford quotes from Cleveland:—

"Here lies, within this stony shade,
Nature's darling, whom she made
Her fairest model, her brief story,
In him heaping all her glory."

Nature's Darling. Knowledge of Greek and Latin being the recognized learning in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and Shakespeare having little of it, he is often spoken of as deriving his knowledge from Nature; see in particular Ben Jonson's lines *To the Memory of Shakespeare*:—

"He was not of an age but for all time! . . .
Nature herself was proud of his designs. . . .
The merry Greek . . . now not please, . . .
As they were not of Nature's family,
Yet must I not give Nature all; thy Art," etc.

And in Milton (*l'Allegro*, 132-134):—

"If Jonson's learnèd sock be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood notes wild."

85. **What time** = at the time in which = when; a Latin idiom. **Avon.** The reference is to Shakespeare's birthplace at Stratford-on-Avon.

86. **the mighty Mother.** Nature. The expression occurs in Dryden's translation of Vergil:—

"On the *green turf* thy careless limbs display,
And celebrate the *mighty mother's* day.—*Georg.* i. 466.

87. **awful**, inspiring awe.

89. **pencil.** Paint-brush; an old use of the word, from Lat. *pensillum*, a brush; he has it again in the *Stanzas to Mr. Bentley*, 4.

87, 88. **The Child Stretched forth** etc. Mitford quotes from Sandys' Ovid, *Metam.* iv. 515 :—

"—— *the child*
Stretched forth its little arms, and on him smiled."

91. **golden keys.** Cf. Milton :—

"Yet some there be, that by due steps aspire
To lay their just hands on that *golden key*
That opes the palace of eternity."—*Comus*, 12-14.

93. **Of Horror that.** That (key can unlock the gates) of Horror.

95. **Nor second.** And equal to him was, etc. Most of the expressions in these lines on Milton (95-102) are borrowed from *Paradise Lost* :—

"He on the wings of cherub rode sublime."—vi. 771.

"Whereon a *sapphire throne*, inlaid with pure
Amber, and colours of the showery arch."—vi. 758.

"Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear."—iii. 380.

96. **Ecstasy**, rapture, inspiration. Gk. ἔκστασις, a standing out of oneself.

97. This alludes to Milton's words in *Par. Lost.* :—

—— "Up led by thee
Into the Heaven of Heavens I have presumed
An earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air."—vii. 12-14.

99. **The living throne.** In his footnote to these words Gray has not quoted the last line in the passage from *Ezekiel* correctly; nor does it refer to the previous part of the quotation.

102. **Closed his eyes.** In allusion to his blindness. Cf. :—

"In æternam clauduntur lumina noctem."—*Æneid*, x. 746.

"And closed her lids, at last, in endless night."—*Dryden.*

103. **less presumptuous**, not aiming at such high things.

105. **Coursers**, horses; literally, runners. There is an allusion to the fabulous winged horse Pegasus, associated with poetic inspiration. **ethereal**, belonging to the upper air, of pure ether. Wakefield quotes from the *Æneid* :—

"Currum, geminosque jugales
Semine ab æthereo, spirantes naribus ignem."—vii. 280.

106. Cf. Pope, *Epistles*, I. ii. 267 :—

"Waller was smooth; but Dryden taught to join
The varying verse, the full *resounding* line,
The long majestic march, and energy divine."

109. **pictured urn**, urn with pictures on it. Cf. "storied urn," *Elegy*, 41, and Milton's *Penseroso*, "storied windows richly dight." The idea is probably borrowed from a picture of a female figure scattering gifts from a jar.

Referring to line 110, Dugald Stewart says:—"I have sometimes thought Gray had in view the two different effects of words already described; the effect of *some*, in awakening the powers of conception and imagination; and that of *others* in exciting associated emotions."—*Philosophy of Human Mind.*

Mr. Gosse points out that Gray has misquoted Cowley in his note. The line is—

"Tears which shall understand and weep."

112. **what daring Spirit**, referring to himself. *daring*, presumptuous, because he inherits neither the pride nor, etc.

113. Cf. *Elegy*, 48:—"Or *wake* to ecstasy the living *lyre*."

114. Pride is a quality generally attributed to an eagle. Cf.:—

"Like to an eagle in his *kingly pride*
Soaring thro' his wide empire of the aire
To weather his brode sailes."—*Faerie Queene*, v. 4. 42.

115. **Theban Eagle**, Pindar.

118. **would run** = were in the habit of running.

120. **unborrowed of the Sun.** Cf. Wordsworth:—

"The light that never was on sea or land."
—*Peele Castle*, 15.

121, 122. **Yet shall he mount.** In the last three lines, Gray expresses his own feelings and character, his pride, and, at the same time, his retiring disposition. **vulgar**, ordinary, common.

123. "Still show how much the *good* outshone the *great*."
—Katharine Philips.

VARIOUS READINGS.

1. Awake, my lyre; my glory, wake.—MS.

2. *Rapture.* Transport.—MS.

11. With torrent rapture, see it pour.—MS.

23. *Dark.* Black.—MS. 30. *Sports.* Sport.—MS.

34. *In cadence.* The cadence.—MS.

52, 53. Till fierce Hyperion from afar
Pours on their scatter'd rear his glitt'ring shafts of war.
Hurls at their flying rear his glitt'ring shafts of war.
Hurls o'er their scatter'd rear his glitt'ring shafts of war.
Hurls o'er their shadowy rear his glitt'ring shafts of war.
Till o'er their shadowy rear from afar
Hyperion hurls around his glitt'ring shafts of war.—MS.

57. *Shivering.* Buried—in the margin of the MS.
Dull. Chill—in the margin of the MS.

76. Murmured a celestial sound.—MS.

93. *Horror.* Terror.—MS.

108. *Bright-eyed.* Full-plumed.—MS.

118. Yet when they first were opened on the day
Before his visionary eyes would run.—MS.

119. *Forms.* Shapes.—MS.

122. Yet never can he fear a vulgar fate.—MS.

VI.—THE BARD.

In a letter, dated August 6, 1755, Gray sent Dr. Wharton the first part of *The Bard*, and on the 21st August 'a bit more of the *Prophecy*' (from line 57 to the end, but unfinished in places). In May, 1757, in a letter to Mason, he states that Parry, the Welsh harper, had been at Cambridge, and his 'ravishing blind harmony' and 'tunes of a thousand years old' had put the 'Odikle' in motion again, and that he had then completed it, and he concluded his letter with the last two stanzas. It was printed, as we have seen, with *The Progress of Poesy* at Horace Walpole's press, and published on the 8th August, 1757, and bore the title of *Ode II.*

In his commonplace book, Gray wrote the following as what he originally intended to be the argument of the *Bard:* but he did not finish it in accordance with his original plan:—"The army of Edward I., as they march through a deep valley, and approach Mount Snowdon, are suddenly stopped by the appearance of a venerable figure seated on the summit of an inaccessible rock, who, with a voice more than human, reproaches the king with all the desolation and misery which he had brought on his country; foretells the misfortunes of the Norman race, and with prophetic spirit declares that all his cruelty shall never extinguish the noble ardour of poetic genius in this island; and that men shall never be wanting to celebrate true virtue and valour in immortal strains, to expose vice and infamous pleasure, and boldly censure tyranny and oppression. His song ended, he precipitates himself from the mountain, and is swallowed up by the river that rolls at its foot."

1. **seize.** Imperative or optative mood. May ruin seize thee. **ruthless King.** Edward I., who subdued Wales in 1282. Note the alliteration throughout, but especially in the first eight lines.

3. **Conquest** or Victory is personified, and is represented as fanning the banners with her wings, which are crimson with the blood of the slain. Victory is represented as a young female with wings, and with a palm-branch, or a wreath, in her hand.

5. **Helm, nor hauberk's** etc. Neither helm nor the mail of the hauberk etc.; the first negative is often omitted in poetry.

Helm is a poetical form of *helmet;* derived from A.S. *helan*, to cover, protect. *Hauberk* comes from *hals*, the neck, and *bergan*, to protect. **mail**, armour, made of metal rings linked together. These words occur together in Dryden's *Palamon and Arcite*, the poem referred to by Gray in the previous Ode :—

"*Hauberks and helms* are hewed with many a wound."

7-8. **secret soul.** Inmost soul, conscience. **Cambria.** The Latin name for Wales, the land of the Cimbri, or Kymry.

9. **crested.** Having a crest or plume of feathers, decorated as a victorious warrior. 'The crested pride of Edward' = Edward proud and gaily decked. Gray refers to Dryden's expression 'the crested adder's pride' as his original. The crest of a snake is the swollen part of its head.

11. **shaggy.** Rough and uneven-looking, owing to being covered with trees. Milton applies the epithet to hills :—

"Nor on the *shaggy top* of Mona high."—*Lycidas*, 54.

"They plucked the seated hills with all their load—
Rocks, waters, woods, and by the *shaggy tops.*"
—*Par. Lost*, vi. 645.

12. **wound his long array.** Made his long array of soldiers wind ; cf. *wind* in *Elegy*, line 2. *Wind* is usually found absolutely, or with a cognate object, such as 'way,' 'course.'

13. **Stout.** Brave ; it frequently occurs in Shakespeare in this sense. **trance** is from Lat. *transitus*, a going over, the transition from life to death : here it simply means a state of dumbness with fright ; cf. *entranced.*

17. **Frown** is a well-chosen word to use with 'haughty brow' ; when one frowns a threatening look is given, hence the brow of the rock which projects in a threatening manner is said to frown over the river. **old** is an epithet frequently applied to a river or a mountain ; cf. "from the bordering *flood* of *old* Euphrates."—*Par. Lost*, i. 420.

18. **haggard** literally means a wild hawk ; hence wild ; but this primitive meaning being forgotten, the word is used as if derived from *hag*, a witch, in the sense of worn, wasted by want or old age. Gray uses *hagged*, like a hag, *Long Story*, 129.

19. **Loose**, adverbial to **Streamed.**

21, 22. With the hand of a master and the ardour of a prophet he struck the chords of his lyre, calling forth deep notes expressive of woe.

23-27. **desert.** Empty. Cf. *Lycidas*, 39-41. **beneath.** Adjectival to *voice.* **hoarser.** More hoarse than usual, or hoarser and hoarser. Cf. *Ode on the Spring*, 11. **vocal.** To be taken with *to the harp.* The oaks wave their arms no longer vocal to the harp

of Hoel or the lay of Llewellyn. *Vocal* may agree with *giant-oak*, or with *arms*. **Vocal to**, responsive, echoing; cf.:—

"To hill or valley, fountain or fresh shade
Made *vocal* by my song."—*Par. Lost*, v. 204.

28. **Hoel** is called *high-born*, being the son of Owen Gwynedd, prince of North Wales. He was one of his father's generals in his wars against the English, Flemings, and Normans, in South Wales; and was a famous bard, as his poems that are extant testify.

Llewellyn was a Welsh prince who was killed in the wars with Edward I. He was also a poet. In contemporary poets he is described as the 'tender-hearted' and 'mild' Llewellyn; so **soft** should be taken with *Llewellyn* and not with *lay*.

29. **Cadwallo** and **Urien** are Welsh bards, but none of their poems are now extant. See Southey's *Madoc in Wales*.

30. "Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,
That the rude sea grew civil at her song."
Midsummer Night's Dream, ii. 2. 150.

Modred may be Myrddin, a disciple of Taliessin, or a name invented by Gray.

34. **Plinlimmon**, a mountain on the borders of Cardigan and Glamorgan. **cloud-topped**. Cf. '*cloud-capt* towers,' in the *Tempest*, iv. 1. 172. The lines mean that even the lofty mountain bent to listen to his song.

35. **Arvon**. Caernarvon, Caer in Arvon, the camp in Arvon. **they**, the bards who had been put to death.

36. Mitford quotes from Percy's *Reliques*:—

"Smeared with gore, a ghastly stream."

40. Mitford refers to *Æneid*, iv. 31:—

"Anna refert: O luce magis dilecta sorori";

and Otway, *Venice Preserved*, Act v.:—

"Dear as the vital warmth that feeds my life,
Dear as these eyes that weep in fondness o'er thee."

48. **weave the tissue**. *Tissue* is properly anything woven. Lat. *texere*, to weave; then 'cloth interwoven with gold or silver threads.' See Webster's *Dictionary* for its figurative meanings; and in illustration of the metaphors from weaving read *The Fatal Sisters*, to which Gray refers in his note.

49. From this line down to the end of line 100, the 'lost companions' of the bard 'join in harmony' with him, and then disappear, and he continues the prophecy alone. This is clearly indicated in all the editions published in Gray's lifetime; in these each line spoken by the bard alone—1 to 8 and 23 to 48—begins with a single inverted comma, and there is one at the end

of line 48. Then from line 49 to 100 there are two inverted commas at the beginning of each line, and two at the end of line 100; and, again, one inverted comma at each line from 101 to 142, which also ends with one. In Wakefield's edition (1786) and Lackington's (1788), the marks are correct. Mason (1775) is also correct, and all reprints I have seen of his editions, except that the two inverted commas at the end of line 100 are placed within the bracket. But in Mitford's edition (1814), the commas at the end of line 100 are omitted, and in other respects the portion of the poem from line 23 to 142 is printed as if an uninterrupted speech by the bard alone. The omission of the inverted commas at the end of line 100 obscures the intention of the poet, and in this Mitford has been followed by almost every subsequent editor of Gray's *Poems*—Moultrie (the Eton edition); Candy (Longmans), 1868; Rolfe (New York), 1876; Gosse, 1884; the Clarendon Press; Hales (*Longer English Poems*), and Ward (*English Poets*).

51. "I have a soul that like an *ample* shield
Can take in all, and *verge enough* for more."
Dryden, *Don Sebastian*, i. 1.

52. **The characters.** The impressions, stamped engravings; *character* is used in its literal sense; see line 96. **Of hell,** hellish, of such a nature as might be expected of evil spirits; cf. *The Fatal Sisters*, 2.

54, 55. **When Severn** etc. 'When the Severn shall affrighted re-echo the shrieks of the king in his agony that ring through the roofs of the castle.'

Berkeley Castle is on the south-east side of the town of Berkeley. Mitford incorrectly reads 'Berkley's *roof*.' Mitford quotes Drayton, *Barons' Wars*, v. 67:—

"Berkley, whose fair seat hath been famous long,
Let thy sad *echoes shriek a deadly sound*
To the vast air; complain his grievous wrong,
And keep the blood that issued from his wound."

56. For the events of Edward the Second's reign, the faithlessness of his wife, Isabella of France, the treason of Mortimer, and the cruel death of the king, read the *Student's Hume*, chap. ix., or Green's *Short History*.

agonizing King. The expression seems to have been taken from Hume's description: "The *screams* with which the *agonising king* filled the castle." The first volume of Hume's *History* was published in 1754, and it is therefore probable that Gray had just been reading it. **agonizing.** Suffering agony; more commonly used as a transitive verb:—

"The lifted axe, the *agonizing* wheel."
Goldsmith's *Traveller*, 435.

57, 58. **She-Wolf.** Isabella, wife of Edward II. This expression is from Shakespeare: "*She-wolf of France*, but worse than wolves of France."—iii. *Henry VI.* i. 4. **That tear'st the bowels.** In allusion to the way in which the king was put to death by order of Mortimer, the queen's paramour.

59, 60. **From thee be born.** 'May one be born of you who hangs the scourge of Heaven over France, your own country'; the reference is to Edward III. **hangs.** Neuter, with **scourge** as nom. after it. **scourge of Heaven.** The instrument of punishment sent by God; see *Isaiah*, x. 26:—"The Lord of Hosts shall stir up a scourge for him."

63. **Mighty Victor.** Edward III., who survived his wife and his eldest son, of whom he was so proud, and was deserted by his friends and his other children.

69. There is a note of interrogation at this line, and the question may be supplied thus: 'The Swarm, that were born in thy noon-tide beam, where are they?" or 'are they fled?' The next line answers "They are gone" etc. **The Swarm** etc. He has the same metaphors in *Agrippina*:—

> "The gilded swarm that wantons in the sunshine
> Of thy full favour."

70. **the rising Morn.** The expression 'rising sun,' in contrast to 'setting sun,' is applied to a new king, governor, or other high authority; and here 'rising morn' refers to Richard II., to whom the swarm of parasites who had fawned on Edward now pay court.

71. **Fair laughs the Morn,** etc. These lines may be paraphrased thus:—The morning (*i.e.* the early years of Richard's reign) is magnificent, and softly the west wind (flattery of courtiers) blows, as the vessel (with the gay king and his friends), decked in all its grandeur, rides proudly on the sea of life, with youth to point the way and pleasure to steer the course. No thought is there of the whirlwind that lies silently in wait to sweep away the prey which at sunset must be his.

In his *Biographia Literaria* (p. 9) Coleridge states his preference for the simile in Shakespeare:—

> "How like a younger, or a prodigal,
> The scarfed bark puts from her native bay,
> Hugged and embraced by the strumpet wind!
> How like a prodigal doth she return,
> With over-weathered ribs, and ragged sails,
> Lean, rent, and beggared by the strumpet wind!"
> *Merchant of Venice*, ii. 6. 14.

"I preferred," he says, "the original, on the ground that, in the imitation, it depended wholly on the compositor's putting or not putting a small capital both in this and many other passages of

the same poet, whether the words should be personifications or mere abstracts. I mention this because in referring various lines in Gray to their original in Shakespeare and Milton—and in the clear perception how completely all the propriety was lost in the transfer—I was, at that early period, led to a conjecture which, many years afterwards, was recalled to me from the same thought having been started in conversation, but far more ably and developed more fully, by Mr. Wordsworth, namely, that this style of poetry, which I have characterized above as translations of prose thoughts into poetic language, had been kept up, if it did not wholly arise from, the custom of writing Latin verses, and the great importance attached to these exercises in our public schools." He also observes that the words 'realm' and 'sway' are rhymes dearly purchased.

75. Cf. in his *Alliance of Education and Government* :—

"And where the deluge burst with *sweepy sway*."—48.

The expression is from Dryden's translation of Vergil :—

"And rolling onwards with a *sweepy sway*."—*Georgics*, i. 483.

79. **Reft of a crown.** Richard was deposed, and Gray adopts the story that he was starved to death. The bard pictures him as suffering the cruel pangs of thirst and hunger while a banquet is before his eyes which he cannot partake of.

80. **the regal chair** here simply means 'where the king is sitting.'

81. **Fell.** Cruel. We have had it before, applied to Disease, *Hymn to Adversity*, 40. **Thirst** and **Famine** are personified as mocking him. *Famine* (Lat. *fames*, hunger) would not now be applied to the sufferings of an individual from hunger, but 'starvation,' a word not in use in Gray's time, it being first used in a speech by Henry Dundas in 1775, thence known as 'Starvation Dundas.' **scowl A smile.** *Smile* is the cognate obj. Cf. Milton's expression, 'grinned a *smile*,' *Par. Lost.* ii. 846.

83. **the din ... bray.** It is unusual to speak of a noise braying. Milton has :—

"... arms on armour clashing brayed
Horrible discord."—*Par. Lost*, vi. 209.

84. **Lance to lance.** This may be construed as an absolute clause, 'lance joining to lance'; or 'lance' and 'horse' may be regarded as in apposition with **din.**

85, 86. **urge.** In its Latin sense of simply 'press on.' **kindred squadrons.** Kindred is used in reference to its being a civil war.

88. **fed** is a striking expression; the Towers (personified) are fed with murder.

90. **holy head.** See *Ode on Eton College*, 4, and note.

91-94. Above and below in the loom we intertwine the roses,

to be united by the marriage of Henry VII. of Lancaster and Elizabeth of York; under the shade of which (union of rose trees) Richard wallows in the blood of the slain princes. He is represented as guilty of their murder, and is under the shade of the united roses, having been slain at the battle of Bosworth.

92. **blushing.** Shakespeare has the same conceit for the red rose:—

"Blush for pure shame to counterfeit our roses."
Henry VI. i. 2.

93. **bristled.** Note the difference between this word (which means having bristles) and *bristling.* **in infant gore.** The murder of the two young princes in the Tower, by order of Richard, 1483. Gray has a hyphen between *infant* and *gore.*

94. **the thorny shade.** The reference is to the thorns of a rose tree.

95. **th' accursed loom.** The loom in which these characters of hell are traced. See also *Fatal Sisters,* 2.

97-99. The order is: We consecrate half of thy heart to sudden fate; *i.e.* your wife shall die soon.

99. **Half of thy heart.** Cf. Horace's "animæ dimidium meæ," *Ode* I. 3. Tennyson alludes to the story of Eleanor's devotion to her husband in his *Dream of Fair Women*:—

"Or her who knew that Love can vanquish Death,
Who kneeling, with one arm about her king,
Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath,
Sweet as new buds in Spring."

consecrate is used in the Latin sense, to dedicate (not necessarily to a good purpose).

100. **The work is done.** Here the 'band of lost companions,' having finished the tissue (line 48), disappear.

101. **Stay.** The bard calls the spirits as they disappear to stay and not leave him forlorn. **forlorn** agrees with **me.**

105, 106. 'Scenes unroll their skirts' is a peculiar poetic imagery. A skirt is the edge or lower part of a garment; cf. 'outskirts.' Gray had in mind Milton's use of *skirt;* he applies it to the outer edging of mists and exhalations—

"Till the sun rise to deck your fleecy *skirts* with gold."
Par. Lost, v. 187.

to the edge of the horizon—

"From skirt to skirt a fiery region."—vi. 80.

to the distant appearance of God's glory—

"Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear."—iii. 380.

"Gladly behold though but his utmost skirts
Of glory."—xi. 332.

107. **Visions of glory.** Webster, the American orator, introduced this passage thus, 'Unborn ages and visions of glory crowd upon my soul!' with fine effect in an eloquent passage in an historical address on the anniversary of Washington's birth, 23rd February, 1852.

108. **unborn Age** occurs in the *Ode at the Installation.*

109-110. **No more ... All hail, ye genuine Kings.** None of the annotators have noted the point in this couplet and in the remainder of the bard's song, though Gray hints at it in his note on line 110. Hitherto the bard has been denouncing the woes that were to befall the Plantagenet line, but on the extinction of the House of York he foresees visions of glory for his native land —not only was England to become a Welsh dependency, ruled by Welsh monarchs, but the race of the bards, that had been cut off by the ruthless Edward, is restored in Spenser and Shakespeare —a new era of bards under a sovereign of Welsh descent!

110, 116. **Britannia's Issue** and **of the Briton-Line** are equivalent to 'Welsh,' the Kelts, original Britons, having been driven into Wales. **genuine.** Native; lit. 'born,' proceeding from the original stock. He has it in the same sense in *Agrippina*:—

> "... who boast the genuine blood
> Of our imperial house."

112. **Sublime.** Here, as elsewhere in Gray's Poems, used in its primary sense, 'lifted up.' See *Progress of Poesy*, 38, 95.

115-118. Elizabeth—**of the Briton-Line**, *i.e.* of the Welsh line, her grandfather Henry VII. being the grandson of Owen Tudor, himself a Welsh chief, and a descendant of the ancient princes of that country.

118. **Attempered to.** Harmonizing with. Cf. 'tempered to,' *Progress of Poesy*, 26.

119. **symphonious.** Sounding in concert; it occurs in the *Ode for Music*, 88, and once in Milton:—

> "... the sound
> *Symphonious* of ten thousand harps that tuned
> Angelic harmonies."—*Par. Lost*, vii. 559.

120. **vocal transport.** Rapturous song; 'transport' is the Latin equivalent of the Greek 'ecstasy.'

123. **soaring, as she sings.** Mitford refers to Congreve's *Ode to Lord Godolphin*:—

> "And soars with rapture while she sings."

Shelley in his ode *To a Skylark* has given a new turn to the words:—

> "And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest."

124. **the eye of Heav'n.** A common poetical expression for the

sun ;—Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, iii. 4, 7 ; Shakespeare, *Sonnet* xviii. ; and Milton, *Paradise Lost* :—

" Thou Sun, of this great world both eye and soul."—v. 171.

125-127. **War, Love,** and **Truth** are the subjects of *adorn*.

128. **buskined.** Used here in the sense of 'dramatic.' The buskin was a high shoe worn by tragic actors to give them height and dignity ; and the 'sock' was used by comic actors. See *L'Allegro*, 132, and *Il Penseroso*, 102, 'the *buskined* stage,' and Ben Jonson's lines *To the Memory of Shakespeare*, 'To hear thy *buskin* tread,' 36.

131. **A Voice** etc. Gales from Eden carry a voice like that of one of the choir of cherubs,—referring to what Milton sang of.

133. **warblings.** *Warble* is a favourite word of Gray's for song or verse—whether of birds or poets. Cf. *Ode on Spring*, 5, *Progress of Poesy*, 26. He seems to have taken it like many another word or phrase from Milton ; in *L'Allegro* Shakespeare is said to

" *Warble* his native wood-notes wild."

Warble or *warbling* occurs fourteen times in Milton, applied to birds, rivers, and the human voice.

They are **distant** and **lessen** because so far off in the future—the poets that were to come after Milton and after Gray himself.

135. **Fond impious Man.** Edward I. is again addressed. **Fond,** foolish. **sanguine cloud** etc. Just as a cloud bedims the day, so the slaughter ordered by Edward is a cloud over the country ; *sanguine*, red (with the blood of the Welsh bards and patriots).

137. **repairs** etc. This seems borrowed from Milton :—

" So sinks the daystar in the ocean-bed,
And yet anon *repairs* his drooping head."—*Lycidas*, 168.

the golden flood. The bright beams of light.

With joy ... our Fates etc. The Bard is still addressing Edward, and says he rejoices at the different doom that awaits the king and himself—the evil that is to fall on the house of the monarch and his descendants, and the triumph of his own poetical descendants in the persons of the Elizabethan poets.

Various Readings.

63. *Victor.* Conqueror.—MS. 64. *His.* The.—MS.

65. *No ... no.* What ... what.—MS.

69. Hovered in the noontide ray.—MS. 70. *Morn.* Day.—MS.

71-76. Mirrors of Saxon truth and loyalty,
Your helpless, old, expiring master view !
They hear not ; scarce religion dares supply
Her muttered requiems, and her holy dew.
Yet thou, proud boy, from Pomfret's walls shall send
A sigh, and envy oft thy happy grandsire's end.—MS.

82. *A baleful smile.* A smile of horror.—MS.

87. *Ye.* Grim.—MS. 90. *Holy.* Hallowed.—MS.

101. *Thus.* Here.—MS.

102. *Me unblessed, unpitied, here.* Your despairing Caradoc.—MS. 103. *Track.* Clouds.—MS. 104. *Melt.* Sink.—MS.

105. *Solemn scenes.* Scenes of Heaven.—MS.

106. *Glittering.* Golden.—MS.

109. *No more our long lost* etc.—

> From Cambria's thousand hills a thousand strains
> Triumphant tell aloud, another *Arthur* reigns.—MS.

111, 112. Youthful knights, and barons bold
With dazzling helm, and horrent spear.—MS.

117. *Her ... her.* A ... an.—MS.

VII.—THE FATAL SISTERS.

THIS Ode was written in 1761, and first published as the seventh in the Poems of 1768. In a letter to Beattie, 1st February, 1768, Gray states that his "sole reason" for publishing this and the following odes is "to make up for the omission of the Long Story," which he did not include in his poems in 1768.

The Ode is a translation or paraphrase from the Norwegian, the original being an Icelandic court poem written about 1029, entitled Darradar Liod, or the Lay of Darts. It refers to the battle of Clontarf, fought on Good Friday, 1014, and represents the Weird Sisters as appearing before the battle and weaving the web of the fate of the King. There is also a Latin version, referred to by Gray.

The friend referred to in the advertisement was Mason, and the 'design was dropped' on his hearing that Thomas Warton was engaged on a History of English Poetry. Warton (1728-1790) was Professor of Poetry at Oxford, and succeeded Whitehead as Poet-Laureate; his *History of English Poetry* was not published till 1774-78-81.

2. **the loom** etc. With the weaving here and in the *Bard* compare the paraphrase of the gipsy's song in *Guy Mannering*:—

> "Twist ye, twine ye! even so
> Mingle shades of joy and woe,
> Hope and fear, and peace and strife
> In the thread of human life.
> . . . . . .
> Now they wax and now they dwindle,
> Whirling with the whirling spindle," etc.

3. The words are explained by Gray's reference in his note.

4. **Hurtle.** Hurl, hurry, and hustle seem to be the ideas in this poetic word, which is used to express a clashing sound and hurried movement. See the line Gray quotes from Shakespeare.

6. **strain.** Stretch tightly.

8. **Orkney's woe.** The fate of the Earl of Orkney. See Gray's Preface. **Randver's bane.** The expression is taken from the original, but the allusion is not clear.

9. **texture.** Same as *tissue;* see *The Bard*, 48.

11. **the weights**, etc. The weights that keep the threads in their places, and are moved about. **play.** One of the idiomatic meanings of play is to 'move freely.' Cf. to 'give play to,' 'in full play.'

13. **Shafts.** Spears or arrows. The shaft is the wooden part of the arrow or the handle of a spear, and the word is commonly used of a spear or an arrow. **shuttles.** The shuttle is the instrument that *shoots* between the threads of the warp, and carries the thread of the woof with it.

14, 16. **Shoot** and **Keep** are imperatives. The sword was to act as a batten to press the threads into their places.

17, 18. The names of the sisters in the original are Hilda, Hiorthrimula, Sangrida, and Swipula. **see.** Lo! used interjectionally.

19. **wayward.** 'Moving to and fro,' hence capricious; but one annotator thinks it is used here for 'weird,' as Shakespeare spelt it 'weyward.' If so, Gray would have spelt it thus, and not given us a totally different word.

22. **sing.** Give a humming sound as they fly through the air.

24. **Hauberk and helmet.** We have had these words in conjunction before,—*The Bard*, 5; so also the expressions, **triumph...die**, which we have met together in line 142 of *The Bard.*

31. **Gondula** and **Geira** were two of the Valkyriur.

32. **the youthful King.** Sictryg; see the Preface and line 56.

33, 34. **To give the reins to**, to let loose, to let have its own way; a metaphor from riding or driving a horse. **Ours.** 'It is ours.'

37-40. **desert beach.** Gray prints and spells thus—desart-beach. The meaning of this verse is that the tribe which has hitherto been confined to the sea-coast shall rule over rich provinces in the interior of Ireland.

41-44. **the dauntless Earl.** Sigurd. **a King.** Brian. **bite the ground**, or 'bite the dust,' a Homeric phrase for die in battle.

45-48. Long shall Eirin mourn his loss, she shall never see him again (or one like him), long shall she steep in sorrow her poetry, immortal verse. **Eirin.** Ireland, another form of Erin.

59, 60. These lines are not in the original. The reference to Scotland is explained in the Preface.

VARIOUS READINGS.

15. *Sword.* Blade.—Wharton MS.

17. *Mista black.* Sangrida.—Wharton MS.

18. *Sangrida.* Mista black.—Wharton MS.

23. *Blade.* Sword.—Wharton MS.

31. *Gondula, and Geira.* Gunna and Gondula.—Pembroke and Wharton MSS.

33. *Slaughter.* havoc.—Pembroke MS.

44. *Shall.* Must.—Wharton MS.

45. *His.* Her.—Pembroke MS.

50. *Blot.* Veil.—Wharton MS.

59. *Winding.* Echoing.—Wharton MS.

64-66. Sisters, hence, 'tis time to ride;
Now your thundering faulchion wield;
Now your sable steed bestride.
Hurry, hurry to the field.—Pembroke MS.

VIII.—THE DESCENT OF ODIN.

THIS Ode, as well as the preceding and the following one, was first published in the edition of 1768. Mitford follows the original title in the MS. and calls it *The Vegtam's Kivitha.*

The original is to be found in Sæmund's Edda. The first five stanzas of this Ode are omitted; in which Balder, one of the sons of Odin, was informed that he should soon die. Upon his communication of his dream, the other gods, finding it true, by consulting the oracles, agreed to ward off the approaching danger, and sent Frigga to exact an oath from every thing not to injure Balder. She, however, overlooked the mistletoe, with a branch of which he was afterwards slain by Hoder, at the instigation of Lok. After the execution of this commission, Odin, still alarmed for the life of his son, called another council; and hearing nothing but divided opinions among the gods, to consult the Prophetess "he up-rose with speed." Vali, or Ali, the son of Rinda, afterwards avenged the death of Balder, by slaying Hoder, and is called a "wondrous boy, because he killed his enemy, before he was a day old; before he had washed his face, combed his hair, or seen one setting-sun." See Herbert's *Icelandic Translations.—Mitford.*

1. **the King of Men.** The god Odin or Wodin.

4. **Hela**, in the Edda, is described with a dreadful countenance, and her body half flesh-colour, and half blue.*

5. The Edda gives this dog the name of Managarmar. He fed upon the lives of those that were to die.—*Mason.*

8-11. **distilled.** An intransitive verb. **Hoarse.** Adverbial to *bays.* **Eyes ... and fangs.** We may understand 'he had' or 'he showed.' **fruitless.** Powerless to harm while under Odin's spell.

14. **groaning.** An expression frequently used in the Greek and Latin poets in describing a deity's movements on the earth.

17. This is line 59 of Milton's *L'Allegro.*

18. **the moss-grown pile.** The grave of the prophetic maid.

21. **clime.** See *The Progress of Poesy*, 54.

22. **Thrice.** The numbers three, seven, and nine are mixed up in mystic and supernatural phenomena. Cf. the words of the witches in *Macbeth*, act iv. 1. **traced.** Wrote (on the ground or in the air). **runic.** The letters of the Norse alphabet were called *runes*, the word *rune* meaning 'mystery.'

22. In a little poem called the *Magic of Odin* (Bartholinus, p. 641), Odin says, "If I see a man dead, and hanging aloft on a tree, I engrave *Runic characters* so wonderful, that the man immediately descends and converses with me. When I see magicians travelling through the air, I disconcert them with a single look, and force them to abandon their enterprise."—*Mitford.*

24. **thrilling.** *Thrill* is from A.S. *thyrlian*, to pierce; from the same root are 'drill,' 'trill,' 'nostril,' and 'through.' **verse that wakes the dead.** The original word is *Valgalldr*; from *Valr* mortuus, and *Galldr* incantatio.*

40. Odin we find both from this Ode and the Edda was solicitous about the fate of his son, Balder, who had dreamed he was soon to die. The Edda mentions the manner of his death when killed by Odin's other son, Hoder, and also that Hoder was himself slain by Vali, the son of Odin and Rinda, consonant with this prophecy.—*Mason.*

43. **Mantling.** To 'mantle,' as applied to liquids, is to froth up, and so make a mantle or covering. Cf.:—

> "There is a sort of men whose visages
> Do cream and *mantle* like a standing pool."
> *Merchant of Venice*, i. 1.
>
> "Nor bowl of wassel *mantle* warm."—*Tennyson.*

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* The notes marked thus (*) are marked G in Mason's Notes, but they never appeared in any edition published in Gray's lifetime. It is probable that Mason drew them up from notes in Gray's commonplace book.

44. **The pure bev'rage of the bee.** Mead, a drink made of honey.

51. Women were looked upon by the Gothic nations as having a peculiar insight into futurity; and some there were that made profession of magic arts and divination. These travelled round the country, and were received in every house with great respect and honour. Such a woman bore the name of Volva Seidkona or Spakona. The dress of Thorbiorga, one of these prophetesses, is described at large in Eirik's Rauda Sogu (apud Bartholin. lib. i. cap. iv. p. 688). She had on a blue vest spangled all over with stones, a necklace of glass beads, and a cap made of the skin of a black lamb lined with white cat-skin. She leaned on a staff adorned with brass, with a round head set with stones; and was girt with an Hunlandish belt, at which hung her pouch full of magical instruments. Her buskins were of rough calf-skin, bound on with thongs studded with knobs of brass, and her gloves of white cat-skin, the fur turned inwards, etc. They were also called *Fiolkyngi*, or *Fiolkunnug*, *i.e.* Multi-scia; and *Visindakona*, *i.e.* Oraculorum Mulier, *Nornir*, *i.e.* Parcæ.*

55. See Matthew Arnold's *Balder Dead*, 1-8:—

> "So on the floor lay Balder dead: and round
> Lay thickly strewn swords, axes, darts, and spears,
> Which all the Gods in sport had idly thrown
> At Balder, whom no weapon pierced or clove;
> But in his breast stood fixt the fatal bough
> Of mistletoe, which Lok the Accuser gave
> To Hoder, and unwitting Hoder threw—
> 'Gainst that alone had Balder's life no charm."

62. There is no note of interrogation at the end of this line in the edition of 1768; the construction being, 'Say by whom,' etc. See *Ode on Eton College*, 21-30.

63. **of the west.** Rinda came from the east of Russia.

64. **compress** agrees with **Rinda.**

66. King Harold made (according to the singular custom of his time) a solemn vow never to *clip or comb his hair*, till he should have extended his sway over the whole country. Herbert, *Icelandic Translations.* In the *Dying Song of Asbiorn.—Mitford.*

67. **visage.** In prose one would not speak of 'washing the visage' or countenance.

69. This means 'triumph over the slain Hoder.'

75. **What virgins these.** These were the Norns or Fates, invisible to mortals; so by recognizing them Odin revealed his divinity.

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* See footnote on page 95.

91. **substantial.** Literally 'having substance'; real. The allusion in these two lines is to the idea that out of Night all things came, and that they will all return to it.

VARIOUS READINGS.

11. *Fruitless.* Ceaseless.—MS.

14. *Shakes.* Quakes.—Wharton MS.

23. *Accents.* Murmurs.—Wharton MS.

27. *Call.* Voice.—Wharton MS.

29. *My troubled.* A weary.—Wharton MS. 35. *He.* This.—Wharton MS. 41. *Yon.* The.—Wharton MS.

48. *Reach.* Touch.—Wharton MS.

51, 52. Prophetess, my call obey,
Once again arise and say.—Wharton MS.

59, 60. Once again my call obey,
Prophetess, arise and say.—Wharton MS.

61, 62. *Who th' Avenger* etc. These verses are transposed in Wharton MS. 65. *Wond'rous.* Giant.—Wharton MS.

74. *Awake.* Arise.—Wharton MS.

77. *That.* Who.—Wharton MS.

79. *Tell me.* Say from.—Wharton MS.

83. The mightiest of the mighty line.—Wharton MS.

87. *Hence and.* Odin.—Wharton MS.

90. *Has.* Have.—Wharton MS.

92. *Has reassumed.* Reassumes her.—Wharton MS.

IX.—THE TRIUMPHS OF OWEN.

THE original Welsh of the above poem was the composition of Gwalchmai, the son of Melir, immediately after Prince Owen Gwynedd had defeated the combined fleets of Iceland, Denmark, and Norway, which had invaded his territory on the coast of Anglesea. There is likewise another poem which describes this famous battle, written by Prince Howel, the son of Owen Gwynedd.—*Mitford.*

3, 4. **of Roderic's stem.** descendant of Roderic. **shield** and **gem** are in apposition with **Owen.** **Gwyneth** is North Wales, and for **Britain,** cf. *The Bard,* 110, and note.

5. **nor heaps his brooded stores.** He neither heaps up stores and broods over them, nor etc. *Brooded* is peculiarly used here

in two respects, to *brood* (except when neuter) being followed by *over* or *on*, and when used metaphorically it refers to a mental state; here it means covered up like eggs under a hen.

7. **every regal art.** All that a king should know. *Art* is here used in its old sense of knowledge, learning; the various meanings and uses of the word should be studied in a dictionary.

8. **hand** and **heart.** 'Were his' may be understood to complete the construction.

9. **Big with.** Full of; the expression is taken from pregnancy.

10. **Squadrons three.** The fleets of Ireland (Eirin), Denmark (Lochlin), and Norway.

11-14. The construction is: 'This (squadron) hiding (concealing) the Irish force; Lochlin, riding side by side as proudly, ploughs the way,' etc.

13. **On her shadow.** The Danish fleet sails on the shadow it makes in the water. Canning, in his celebrated simile, speaks of 'those tremendous fabrics now reposing on their shadows in perfect stillness.'—*Candy.* **Her** stands for *Lochlin*, an army or fleet being often described by the name of the country itself. **long** and **gay** agree with *Lochlin.*

14, 15. See Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, vi. 22:—

> "For thither came, in times afar,
> Stern *Lochlin's* sons of roving war,
> The *Norsemen* trained to spoil and blood."—324-326.

15. **the Norman sails.** The sails of the Norwegian fleet. *Norman* means Northman, Norse.

17. **Black and huge** agree with *squadrons.*

20. **Mona.** Anglesea.

21. **In arms and glory drest.** Note the hendiadys.

22. **ruby crest.** A red dragon was the device Owen wore.

25. **Talymalfra.** Moelfre, a small bay on the north-east coast of Anglesea.

27. After line 26 there are the four following lines in the MS.; but, though Gray never printed them, Mason inserted them in his edition, and they have been retained in the text by all subsequent editors.

> Checked by the torrent-tide of blood,
> Backward Meinai rolls his flood;
> While, heaped his master's feet around,
> Prostrate warriors gnaw the ground.

27. From this line to the end is Gray's amplification rather than a translation, very little of it being in the original, which closes as follows: "And the glory of our Prince's wide-wasting

sword shall be celebrated in a hundred languages, to give him his merited praise."

The omission of this sentence and his not printing the four lines quoted above may account for Gray's describing this as 'a Fragment."

glowing eye-balls. See the *Descent of Odin*, 10.

28. **burn.** Glitter, flash like flames.

29. **purple.** Red with the blood of the slain; in the prose version it is 'crimson lance.'

30, 31. **Marking ... Fear,** etc. Marking with indignant looks those who were afraid to stop, or ashamed to fly. This is a peculiar use of the abstract for the concrete. **Marking** agrees with *he*.

35. **Agony, that pants** etc. Those in the agonies of death.

X.—THE ELEGY.

THE *Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard* was begun at Stoke-Poges in 1742, probably about the time of the death of Gray's uncle, Jonathan Rogers, who died there on the 21st of October. In the winter of 1749, after the death of his aunt, Mary Antrobus, Gray resumed it at Cambridge, and finished it at Stoke early in June, 1750; and on the 12th of that month he sent a copy of it in MS. to Horace Walpole, who circulated it among his friends. On the 10th of February, 1751, Gray received a letter from the editors of the *Magazine of Magazines*, asking permission to publish it. He thereupon wrote next day to Walpole, as follows:—

"CAMBRIDGE, *Feb.* 11, 1751.

"As you have brought me into a little sort of distress, you must assist me, I believe, to get out of it as well as I can. Yesterday I had the misfortune of receiving a letter from certain gentlemen (as their bookseller expresses it), who have taken the *Magazine of Magazines* into their hands. They tell me that an *ingenious* Poem, called reflections in a Country Church-yard, has been communicated to them, which they are printing forthwith; that they are informed that the *excellent* author of it is I by name, and that they beg not only his *indulgence*, but the *honour* of his correspondence, &c. As I am not at all disposed to be either so indulgent, or so correspondent as they desire, I have but one bad way left to escape the honour they would inflict upon me; and therefore am obliged to desire you would make Dodsley print it immediately (which may be done in less than a

week's time) from your copy, but without my name, in what form is most convenient for him, but on his best paper and character; he must correct the press himself, and print it without any interval between the stanzas, because the sense is in some places continued beyond them; and the title must be,—Elegy, written in a Country Church-yard. If he would add a line or two to say it came into his hands by accident, I should like it better. If you behold the *Magazine of Magazines* in the light that I do, you will not refuse to give yourself this trouble on my account, which you have taken of your own accord before now. If Dodsley do not do this immediately, he may as well let it alone."

Walpole lost no time, and on the 16th of February the poem was published in a quarto pamphlet, the following being the contents of the title-page:—"*An Elegy Wrote in a Country Church Yard.* London: Printed for R. Dodsley in Pall-Mall; and sold by M. Cooper in Pater-Noster Row. 1751. (Price sixpence)."

This then was the first appearance of the *Elegy* in print. It was anonymous, and contained these prefatory remarks by Walpole:—

Advertisement.—The following POEM came into my Hands by Accident, if the general Approbation with which this little Piece has been spread, may be called by so slight a Term as Accident. It is this Approbation which makes it unnecessary for me to make any Apology but to the Author: As he cannot but feel some Satisfaction in having pleas'd so many Readers already, I flatter myself he will forgive my communicating that Pleasure to many more.—*The Editor.*

The poem was at once reproduced in the magazines; it appeared in the *Magazine of Magazines* on the 28th of February, in the *London Magazine* on the 31st of March, and in the *Grand Magazine of Magazines* on the 30th of April.

Gray has entered the following note in the margin of the Pembroke MS.:—"Published in Febry. 1751, by Dodsley, & went thro' four editions, in two months; and afterwards a fifth, 6th, 7th, & 8th, 9th, 10th, & 11th; printed also in 1753 with Mr. Bentley's Designs, of wch. there is a 2d edition; & again by Dodsley in his *Miscellany*, vol. 4th, & in a Scotch Collection call'd the *Union;* translated into Latin by Chr. Anstey, Esq., and the Revd. Mr. Roberts, & published in 1762, & again in the same year by Rob. Lloyd, M.A."

It first appeared with Gray's name in the *Six Poems* of 1753.

Mason says that Gray "originally gave it only the simple title of 'Stanzas written in a Country Churchyard,'" but that he "persuaded him first to call it an Elegy, because the subject authorized him so to do, and the alternate measure seemed particularly fit for that species of composition; also so capital a poem written in this measure, would as it were appropriate it in future to writings of this sort."

The title of the eighth edition, 1753, is "Elegy, originally written in a Country Churchyard."

Three copies of the *Elegy* in Gray's handwriting still exist. One of these belonged to Wharton, and is now among the Egerton MSS. in the British Museum, and this copy is therefore referred to as the '*Egerton MS.*' The two other copies were among the "books, manuscripts, coins, music printed or written, and papers of all kinds," which Gray bequeathed in his will to Mason, "to preserve or destroy at his own discretion." These Mason bequeathed to Stonehewer (Fellow of St. Peter's College, Cambridge, and a friend of Gray's), who, at his death in 1809, left the greater portion to Pembroke College, and the remainder to his friend Mr. Bright,—each set containing a copy of the *Elegy*. The copy in the possession of the College is usually described as the '*Pembroke MS.*,' and of it there is a facsimile in Mathias' edition of Gray's Works, published in 1814. The collection left to Mr. Bright was sold by auction in 1845; the MS. of the *Elegy* was bought by Mr. Granville John Penn, of Stoke Park, for £100; in 1854 the MS. was sold for £131; and in 1875 it was bought by Sir William Fraser for £230, who had 100 copies of it printed in 1884. Mr. Rolfe calls this the 'Fraser MS.,' and Mr. Gosse refers to it as the 'Mason MS.'; but it may not always belong to the Fraser family; and 'Mason MS.' is not sufficiently distinctive, as the 'Pembroke MS.' was also Mason's. As this MS. seems to have been the rough draft, and contains a greater number of original readings and alterations, the other two apparently being made from it by Gray when he had almost ceased correcting the *Elegy*, I shall refer to it in the Notes and Various Readings as the '*Original MS.*'

1. **The curfew.** The curfew was a bell, or the ringing of a bell, rung at eight o'clock in the evening for putting out fires (Fr. *couvre*, cover, and *feu*, fire), a custom introduced by William the Conqueror. The word continued to be applied to an evening bell long after the law for putting out fires ceased, but it is not now so used, and the word would have become obsolete but for Gray's use of it here, and when one speaks of the curfew one thinks of the first line of the *Elegy*. It occurs frequently in Shakespeare, and Milton uses it twice,—*Comus*, 435, and in the well-known lines in *Il Penseroso*:—

> "I hear the far-off curfew sound
> Over some wide-watered shore."—74, 75.

Gray quotes in original the lines from Dante which suggested this line. Cary's translation is as follows:—

> "And pilgrim, newly on his road with love,
> Thrills if he hear the vesper bell from far,
> That seems to mourn for the expiring day."

parting. Departing, dying. See line 89, and cf.:—

"Beside the bed where *parting* life was laid."
Deserted Village, 171.

The knell is a 'passing bell' for the dying day.

2. **wind.** This is the correct reading, as, though *winds* occurs in the first printed edition (1751), *wind* is what Gray has in the MS. copies and in the first edition of his Poems (1768), as well as in all reprints of the *Elegy* approved by him. After 1751 the first edition I find with *winds* is Stephen Jones', 1799, and though Mitford in his edition of 1814 has *wind*, in the Aldine edition (1836) he has *winds*, and is followed—without comment—by almost all subsequent editors of Gray's *Poems*, and in popular reprints of the *Elegy*. Another false reading is *herds* for *herd*.

3. Observe the various inversions this line is capable of,—'Homeward the ploughman plods his weary way,' and about a dozen more.

4. **and to me.** The poet refers to himself here and again in line 93 to the end. It adds to the solemnity of the position of the soliloquist to be thus described as being the sole occupant of 'the world'; and it is with a self-complacent feeling that the reader adopts the language and situation to himself.

5. **glimmering.** Cf. Milton's use of this word:—'A glimmering dawn', *Par. Lost*, 1037; 'glimmering air,' iii. 429; 'glimmering bowers and shades,' *Il Penseroso*, 27.

6. **air.** Objective case.

7. **the beetle** etc. Cf.:—

"The shard-borne *beetle* with his drowsy hums
Hath rung night's yawning peal."—*Macbeth*, iii. 2. 42.

"Or where the *beetle* winds
His small but sullen horn."
Collins, *Ode to Evening*, 11.

9. **yonder.** The use of this word is a 'graphic touch,' and adds vividness to the description, brings the scene before our eyes, as it were; so again '*that* yew-tree,' 13; '*yon* aged thorn,' 116.

10. **moping.** Referring to the solitary habits of the owl. Cf. Thomson, in *Winter* (pub. 1726):—

"Assiduous in his *bower* the *wailing owl*
Plies his sad song."—114.

13. **that yew-tree.** The yew-tree under which Gray often sat in Stoke churchyard still exists there; it is on the south side of the church, its branches spread over a large circumference, and under it as well as under its shade there are several graves.

14. Wakefield quotes from Parnell's *Night Piece on Death* (1722):—

> "Those graves with bending osier bound,
> That nameless heave the crumbled ground."—29, 30.

16. **rude** here means rustic, simple; he applies it to the beech, *Spring*, 13. Throughout the *Elegy* he refers to the poor, the people of the hamlet, as contrasted with the rich, who were interred and had their monuments inside the church. In the MSS. left by Mitford, now in the British Museum, he has recorded the following line found among Gray's papers, jotted down probably for the *Elegy*, cf. lines 57-60; but it may be quoted here as an illustration of his use of *rude*:—

> "The *rude* Columbus of an infant world."

13-16. This stanza and the ninth form the inscription on the east side of the monument to Gray in Stoke Park.

17. **incense-breathing.** Sending forth fragrant smells.

> "Now whenas sacred light began to dawn
> In Eden on the humid flowers, that breathed
> Their morning *incense*."—*Par. Lost*, ix. 192-194.

19. **The cock's shrill clarion.** A *clarion* is a wind instrument, a kind of trumpet, with a shrill sound, from Lat. *clarus*, clear. It is from Milton that he takes *clarion* for the sound of the cock's crow:—

> ". . . the crested cock, whose *clarion* sounds
> The silent hours."—*Par. Lost*, vii. 443.

Cf. also:—

> "When chanticleer with *clarion shrill* recalls
> The tardy day."—Philip's *Cyder*, i. 753 (pub. 1708).

> "The cock that is the trumpet to the morn
> Doth with his lofty and *shrill*-sounding throat
> Awake the god of day."—*Hamlet*, i. 1. 150.

In the original MS. the reading is:—'Or chanticleer so shrill or echoing horn'; the word 'chanticleer' itself meaning 'clear-singing,' and the name of the cock in Chaucer's *Nun's Priest's Tale* was Chauntecleer. **the echoing horn.** The huntsman's horn, that wakens echoes. Cf. Milton again:—

> "Oft listening how the hounds and *horn*
> Cheerly *rouse* the slumbering morn,
> From the side of some hoar hill
> Through the high wood *echoing* shrill."—*L'Allegro*, 53.

20. **their lowly bed.** The humble bed in which they have been sleeping. Lloyd in his Latin translation strangely mistook 'lowly bed' for the grave.

21-24. The following are parallel passages :—

"Jam jam non domus accipiet te læta, neque uxor
Optima, nec dulces occurrent oscula nati
Præripere, et tacita pectus dulcedine tangent."
Lucretius, iii. 894.

"Quod si pudica mulier in partem juvet
Domum atque dulces liberos, . . .
Sacrum et vetustis exstruat lignis focum
Lassi sub adventum viri."—Horace, *Epode*, ii. 39.

"In vain for him the officious wife prepares
The fire fair-blazing, and the vestment warm;
In vain his little children, peeping out
Into the mingling storm, demand their sire
With tears of artless innocence."—Thomson, *Winter*, 311.

22. **ply her ... care.** Be busied at her household duties. Some annotators take exception to this use of *ply;* but it is a shortened form of *apply* similarly used by Milton and old writers :—"He is ever at his plow, he is ever *applying his business.*"—*Latimer.*

"The birds their *choir apply.*"—*Par. Lost*, iv. 264.

"Assiduous in his bower the wailing owl
Plies his sad *song.*"—Thomson, *Winter*, 114.

And Gray has "their labours *ply*" in the *Ode on Eton*, 32. The expression is a good instance of the poetical language against which Wordsworth protested. When he had occasion to refer to a similar scene, he wrote :—

"And she I cherished *turned her wheel*
Beside an English fire."

23. **lisp their sire's return.** Salute in childish accents their father returning home. *Lisp* takes a cognate object, to 'lisp his name,' to 'lisp his return.' Cf. Pope's use of *lisp* :—

"As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
I *lisped* in numbers, for the numbers came."

25. **the stubborn glebe.** Luke quotes from Gay's *Fables* :—

"'Tis mine to tame the *stubborn glebe.*"

Glebe is used in its primary sense from Lat. *gleba*, a sod, the ground :—

"Rastris glebas qui frangit inertes."—*Georgics*, i. 94.

has broke, for 'has broken'; see *Progress of Poesy*, 56. A furrow is a trench made by a plough, and it is a curious poetic license to say that the furrow breaks the glebe.

27. **team** is a group of animals or of persons associated together; a 'team of swans' (Dryden), a team of players at cricket, football, etc.; a team of oxen or horses is two or more harnessed

together at work. Milton uses it of the horses of the sun :—

" Now, while the heaven, by the sun's *team* untrod."
On the Morning of Christ's Nativity.

afield. To the field. Milton's expression, "we drove afield," *Lycidas*, 27.

28. Wakefield quotes from Spenser's *Shepherd's Kalendar* :—

" But to the root bent his *sturdie stroak*,
And made many wounds in the wast oak."—*February.*

sturdy stroke also occurs in Dryden's translation of the *Georgics*, iii. 639.

32. This, like many another line in the *Elegy*, may be said to be part of the English language ; it was 'chiselled for immortality.'

33-36. This stanza is the second of the two on the east side of the monument, *vide* note on 13-16.

Hurd refers to these lines in his note on the following passage in Cowley :—

" *Beauty*, and strength, and wit, and *wealth*, and *power*,
Have their short flourishing *hour* ;
And love to see themselves, and smile,
And joy in their pre-eminence a while ;
E'en so in the same land
Poor weeds, rich corn, gay flowers together stand.
Alas ! Death mows down all with an impartial hand."

But Gray is likely to have had West and his *Monody on Queen Caroline* in his mind ; not only as the early death of his friend, which occurred a few months before he began to write the *Elegy*, was almost always before him, but as West's Ode (which Gray refers to in a letter in Nov. 1747 as, "in spite of the subject, excellent") had been published a few months before he finished the *Elegy*, in Vol. II. of Dodsley's *Collection*, immediately after Gray's three Odes. The lines are :—

" These are thy glorious deeds, almighty Death !
These are thy triumphs o'er the sons of men,
That now receive the miserable breath,
Which the next moment they resign again !
Ah me ! what boots us all our *boasted power*,
Our golden treasure, and our *purple state* ;
They cannot ward th' *inevitable hour*,
Nor stay the fearful violence of fate."—73-80.

33. **The boast of heraldry.** The pride of long descent. *Heraldry* is the art of recording genealogies ; see *herald* and *Herald's College* in the Dictionary.

35. **Awaits.** This is Gray's reading in his MSS. and in the editions published by him ; but almost all editors follow Mason

and Mitford and read *await*. Scott of Amwell in his *Critical Essay* on the *Elegy*, published in 1785, writes in a footnote: "It should be *await*, the plural, for it includes a number of circumstances." I have traced *await* back to the appearance of the *Elegy* in Dodsley's *Collection of Poems*, *i.e.* in Volume IV. published in 1755. But as in the editions of the *Elegy* in 1753, 'corrected by the author,' and in his last edition, 1768, Gray prints *awaits*, it is clear that he intended it to be so retained; besides, it is better to take 'inevitable hour' as the subject of 'awaits,' and not 'boast,' 'pomp,' etc.; as not only is this inversion more in Gray's manner, but also the statement that the inevitable hour of death is waiting for the great, the beautiful and the wealthy, like the

"whirlwind's sway,
That hushed in grim repose *expects* his evening prey."

Also see *Epitaph on Mrs. Clarke*, 11; and *Shakespeare Verses*, 8.

36. In Hayley's *Life of Crashaw*, in the Biographia Britannica, it is said that this line is "literally translated from the Latin prose of Bartholinus in his Danish Antiquities."

37-40. The meaning of this stanza is: 'And you proud people, do not blame them if their friends do not erect monuments in the choir of the church.' The order is: 'If Memory raise no trophies where the pealing anthem,' etc.

39. **fretted vault.** The arched roof ornamented with fretwork. Look out the derivation etc. of *trophies*, *aisle*, *fretted*, and *anthem*, and cf. *A Long Story*, 5, and :—

". . . the roof o' the chamber
With golden cherubims is *fretted*."—*Cymbeline*, ii. 4. 87.

"This majestical roof *fretted* with golden fire."
Hamlet, ii. 2. 313.

"And love the high embossed roof, . . .
And *storied* windows richly dight . . .
There let the *pealing* organ blow
To the full-voiced choir below,
In service high and *anthem* clear."—*Il Penseroso*, 163.

41. **storied urn.** Monument with inscriptions telling the 'story' or history of the departed. An urn was a vessel used by the ancients for holding the ashes of the dead after cremation; and a representation of an urn is sometimes placed on tablets and tombstones. Shakespeare uses *urn* in the sense of a grave, and Milton for monument with inscription :—

"Or lay these bones in an unworthy urn,
Tombless, with no remembrance over them."
Henry V. i. 2. 228.

"So may some gentle Muse
With lucky words favour my destined *urn*."—*Lycidas*, 20.

With 'storied urn' compare 'pictured urn' in *The Progress of Poesy*, 109. **animated bust.** Life-like statue; cf. Virgil's 'spirantia æra' (breathing brass), *Æneid*, vi. 847: 'animate thy clay,' *Bard*, 122; and Pope's *Temple of Fame*:—

"Heroes in *animated marble* frown."—73.

42. **fleeting**, short-lived; an adjective.

43. **Honour's voice**, words or speeches in honour of the dead. **provoke**, call forth; the literal meaning, but most unusual; in the Original MS. the reading is 'awake.'

44. **dull cold.** These words occur together in Shakespeare:—

"And, when I am forgotten, as I shall be,
And sleep in dull cold marble."—*Henry VIII.* iii. 2. 433.

46. **pregnant with celestial fire.** Full of heaven-sent inspiration; cf. 'the Muse's *flame*,' line 72; a 'prophet's *fire*,' *The Bard*, 21. Cowper has the expression in *Boadicea*:—

"Such the bard's prophetic words,
Pregnant with celestial fire,
Bending as he swept the chords
Of his sweet but awful lyre."

And cf. Shakespeare, *Henry V.*:—

"O for a Muse of *fire*, that would ascend
The brightest heaven of invention."—i. 1. 1.

47. **Hands** etc. Perhaps some hands are laid here which might have wielded the sceptre. Mitford quotes from Ovid:—

"Sunt mihi quas possint sceptra decere manus."—*Ep.* v. 86.

rod. He first wrote *reins;* and changed it probably because Tickell has it in his lines on the death of Addison *To Earl Warwick*:—

"Proud names, who once the reins of empire held."—37.

48. **waked to ecstasy.** See *The Progress of Poesy*, lines 1, 2, 96, 113. **living lyre** is an expression from Cowley.

49, 50. **her page ... unroll.** The metaphor is taken from the primary meaning of *volume*, a roll. **the spoils of time.** The wealth accumulated by time.

51. **rage.** A word common in the poets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for poetic fire:—

"Thy humblest reed could more prevail,
Had more of strength, *diviner rage*,
Than all which charms this laggard age."
Collins, *The Passions*, 110.

52. **genial.** Warm, joyous; the root-meaning is productive, fruitful.

53-56. Various originals have been cited for this famous

stanza, but often as the thought may have occurred before Gray it is in the form in which he has worded it that it is known the world over. Mitford quotes:—

"There is many a rich stone laid up in the bowels of the earth, many a fair *pearl in the bosom of the sea*, that never was seen, nor never shall be." Bishop Hall's *Contemplations*, vi. 872.

A writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for May, 1782, refers to Young, *Universal Passion*:—

"In distant wilds, by human eyes *unseen*,
She rears her flowers, and spreads her *velvet green*;
Pure gurgling rills the lonely *desert* trace,
And *waste their music* on the savage race."—*Sat.* v.

Gray introduces 'the gem and the flower' in his *Ode at the Installation* (written nearly twenty years later) thus:—

"Thy liberal heart, thy judging eye,
The *flower unheeded* shall descry,
And bid it round heaven's altars shed
The fragrance of its *blushing* head;
Shall raise from earth the *latent gem*
To glitter on the diadem."—71-76.

53. **purest ray serene.** Most pure and bright ray; this position of the adjectives Gray adopts from Milton, with whom it is a favourite arrangement.

56. Churchill quotes this line in the *Ghost*, 1762, by which time it was probably a familiar quotation:—

"So that they neither give a tawdry glare,
Nor 'waste their sweetness on the desert air.'"

57-60. This stanza is an expansion and application of the previous one:—Just as there are gems and flowers unseen and unheard of, so here may lie one who had the spirit of Hampden, another who had the genius of Milton, and a third who might have become a statesman such as Cromwell; but, from want of the opportunity to develope their powers, the one remained but a village-patriot, resisting his local oppressor, the poetic vein in the other never found expression in verse or 'waked the lyre,' and he who might have held the rod of empire remained guiltless of his country's blood.

58. **The little tyrant of his fields.** Some one who interfered with his rights; 'little' in comparison with the one whom Hampden opposed.

59. **mute inglorious.** Without poems and therefore not celebrated.

For the allusions to Hampden (1594-1643), Milton (1608-1674), and Cromwell (1599-1658), the student should refer to a *History*.

Instead of these three names there are, in the Original MS.,

Cato, Tully, and Cæsar; but the change to well-known characters of our own country has added to the vividness as well as fixed the nationality of a poem that has been translated into so many languages.

It is noteworthy that both Hampden and Milton lived in Buckinghamshire—the county in which is the Stoke-Poges Churchyard. Hampden was M.P. for Buckingham, and it was as a resident of that county that he refused to pay ship money. Chalfont, in which is the cottage where Milton finished *Paradise Lost*, is only a few miles from the 'churchyard' of the *Elegy*.

Mitford quotes the following from Plautus as the thought in brief of this stanza and lines 45-48:—

> "Ut sæpe summa ingenia in occulto latent,
> Hic qualis imperator, nunc privatus est."—*Captiv.* iv. 2.

61-64. The order is:—Their lot forbad them to command the applause of senates, to despise the threats of pain, to scatter plenty, and to see in the contented looks of a whole nation the record of their acts.

63. **To scatter plenty** etc. Mitford quotes a line from Tickell, and one from Mrs. Behn containing these expressions; but Gray repeats what he wrote in *Education and Government*:—

> "If equal Justice with unclouded face
> *Smile* not indulgent on the rising race,
> And *scatter* with a free, though frugal, hand
> Like golden showers of *plenty o'er the land*."—15-18.

The early poems and translations of Gray, unpublished in his lifetime, and now so little read, are like a storehouse from which he took thoughts and expressions for the *Odes* and *Elegy*. In *Agrippina* he has 'the senate's joint applause,' 77 (*Elegy*, 61); 'he lived unknown to fame or fortune,' 38 (*Elegy*, 118), and (besides several others):—

> "Thus ever grave and undisturbed reflection
> Pours its cool dictates in the *madding* ear
> Of rage, and thinks to *quench* the fire it feels not."—81-83.

65. **Their lot forbad to command.** For the omission of the pronoun, cf. 'bad to form,' *Hymn to Adversity*, 12. **nor**, and not. Their lot, their obscure destiny, did not limit merely the growth of their virtues, but the nature and extent of their crimes.

67, 68. Exaggerated metaphors for to obtain power by bloodshed, and to show no pity. Shakespeare (*Henry V.*) has:—

> "The *gates of mercy* shall be all *shut up*."—iii. 3. 10.

69. **The struggling pangs** etc. To hide the efforts of truth, the truth of which they are conscious, in its struggles to come forth. Truth is metaphorically represented as struggling to be

born; and to stifle its pangs in endeavouring to assert itself is equivalent to stifling free inquiry and the evidence of truth,—this their obscure lot forbad them to do.

70. **quench the blushes.** This is in Shakespeare, *Winter's Tale*:—

"Come, *quench your blushes*, and present yourself."—iv. 4. 67.

ingenuous. Genuine, natural; the 'in' is not negative.

71. **heap the shrine**, etc. To present offerings of verses and flattering poetry to the rich and great. *Shrine* is here used for altar.

72. **incense.** Cf. 'venal incense,' *Ode for Music*, 79. **the Muse's flame.** The inspiration of the poet.

The whole stanza is equivalent to:—They are not bereft of all feelings of truth and honesty, nor are they mean flatterers of the great.

After this verse, in the Original MS. of the poem, are the four following stanzas:—

The thoughtless world to Majesty may bow,
Exalt the brave, and idolize success;
But more to innocence their safety owe
Than power and genius e'er conspired to bless.

And thou, who mindful of th' unhonoured dead
Dost in these notes their artless tale relate,
By Night and lonely Contemplation led
To linger in the gloomy walks of Fate;

Hark! how the sacred Calm, that broods around,
Bids ev'ry fierce tumultuous passion cease;
In still small accents whispering from the ground
A grateful earnest of eternal Peace.

No more with reason and thyself at strife,
Give anxious cares and endless wishes room;
But thro' the cool sequestered vale of life
Pursue the silent tenor of thy doom.

73-6. **the madding crowd's** etc. The construction is: They being far from the crowd, their wishes never learned to wander.

73. **madding.** 'Maddening' would be the more correct formation; but Gray's use of *madding* has given it currency, and 'Far from the Madding Crowd' has been adopted as the title of a novel, just as 'Annals of the Poor,' 32, supplied the title of Leigh Richmond's well-known work. Rogers quotes from one of Drummond's Sonnets:—

"Far from the *madding* worldling's hoarse discord."

Madding occurs in *Paradise Lost*:—

"the *madding* wheels
Of brazen chariots raged."—vi. 210.

Gray has it in *Agrippina*, 83, already quoted.

needs the tears of affection: and even after one is buried the same natural desire for loving remembrance shows itself: and when all is dust and ashes the fire that was accustomed to be in those ashes lives in them (and finds expression in the inscriptions on the tombs).

Here Mitford quotes Drayton and Pope:—

"It is some comfort to a wretch to die,
(If there be comfort in the way of death)
To have some friend, or kind alliance by
To be officious at the parting breath."—*Moses.*

"No friend's complaint, no *kind domestic tear*
Pleased thy pale ghost, or graced thy mournful bier,
By foreign hands thy dying *eyes were closed.*"—*Elegy*, 81.

90. **pious** is used in the sense of the Lat. *pius*, dutiful; the "piæ lacrimæ" of Ovid, *Trist.* IV. iii. 41; and cf. "debita lacrima," Horace, *Odes*, II. vi. 23, and Ovid:—

"Quamvis in cinerem corpus mutaverit ignis,
Sentiet officium mæsta favilla pium."—*Trist.* iii. 3. 83.

92. The translation of the lines Gray quotes from Petrarch is:—

"These, my sweet fair, so warns prophetic thought,
(Closed thy bright eye, and mute thy poet's tongue)
E'en after death shall still with sparks be fraught."—Nott.

Gray translated this sonnet into Latin Elegiacs, the last two lines of his version being:—

Infelix musa æternos spirabit amores,
Ardebitque urnâ multa favilla meâ.

Still more closely does line 92 resemble one in Chaucer, in the *Reeve's Prologue*, speaking of old men not forgetting the passions of their youth:—

"Yet in our ashen cold is fire yreken."—3880.

It has been suggested that the first line of this stanza seems to regard the near approach of death; the second, its actual advent; the third, the time immediately succeeding its advent; the fourth, a time still later.

93-96. **For thee**, as for thee. The order is: For thee (who, mindful of the unhonoured dead, dost relate their artless tale in these lines) if (by) chance some kindred spirit, led (hither) by lonely contemplation, shall inquire thy fate.

93. **unhonoured**, without the funeral honours referred to in lines 38-44.

94. **artless**, simple; compare with this *artful*, cunning.

95. **chance**, by chance; here *chance* is an adverb; it is also a noun, a verb, and an adjective.

96. **kindred spirit**, some person with similar feelings to the poet, some one like himself fond of contemplation and of a pensive turn.

This stanza is altered from the second of the rejected stanzas quoted above as coming after line 72 in the Original MS.; and in that MS. instead of this stanza (lines 93-96) there are two, the entry in the MS. being:—"For thee who mindful etc. as above," *i.e.* the remainder of the rejected stanza, and after that the following:—

"If chance that e'er some pensive spirit more
By sympathetic musings here delayed,
With vain tho' kind enquiry shall explore
Thy once loved haunt, this long deserted shade."

97. **swain** originally meant a servant, then a countryman, a rustic, and in pastoral poetry a lover; here it means countryman; it was latterly confined to poetry, and may be included among the eighteenth century poetical terms not now used. Cf. 'fellow-swains,' *Amatory Lines*, 7.

98. **peep of dawn.** Both here and in the *Installation Ode* Gray has Milton's expressions in view:—

"See the blabbing eastern scout,
The nice Morn, on the Indian steep,
From her cabined loophole *peep*,
And to the tell-tale sun descry
Our concealed solemnity."—*Comus*, 138-142.

And in the *Installation Ode* he puts the following words into Milton's mouth,—*dawn* rhyming as here with *lawn*:—

"Oft at the blush of dawn
I trod your level lawn."—30, 31.

99, 100. **Brushing ... the dews ... upland lawn.** Milton's words again:— ... "though from off the boughs each morn
We *brush* mellifluous *dews*."—*Par. Lost*, v. 428, 429.

"Together both, ere the high *lawns* appeared
Under the opening eyelids of the morn,
We drove afield."—*Lycidas*, 25-27.

After this stanza there is the following in the Original MS.:—

Him have we seen the greenwood side along,
While o'er the heath we hied, our labours done,
Oft as the woodlark piped her farewell song,
With wistful eyes pursue the setting sun.

"I rather wonder that he rejected this stanza, as it not only has the same sort of Doric delicacy which charms us peculiarly in this part of the poem, but also completes the account of his whole day; whereas, this evening scene being omitted, we have only his morning walk, and his noon-tide repose."—*Mason*.

In a footnote the reviewer of Mason's edition of Gray's Poems, in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, June, 1775, says Gray plainly alludes to this stanza and this evening employment when in a subsequent stanza he mentions not only the customed hill etc., but also the heath.

101. **yonder nodding beech.** It is '*at the foot*' of a *beech* that Gray describes himself as 'squatting,' in a letter to Walpole (already quoted, note on line 17 of the *Ode on the Spring*), and there he 'grows to the trunk for a whole morning.'

103. **listless length ... stretch.** He would stretch himself full length, and lie in a listless manner. Cf. :—

> ... "he lay along
> Under an oak, whose antique roots peep out
> Upon the brook that brawls along this wood."
> *As You Like It*, ii. 1. 31.

"Stretched out all the chimney's length."—*L'Allegro*, 111.

would he, he was in the habit of.

104. **pore**, gaze upon.

105. **Hard by**, close to, near; cf. 'fast by'; the idea seems to be that of pressed close; it is an old use of hard:—"whose house joined *hard* to the synagogue."—*Acts*, xviii. 7.

"Of Moloch homicide, lust *hard by* hate."—*Par. Lost*, i. 417.

"Tending my flocks *hard by*."—*Comus*, 531.

"*Hard by*, a cottage chimney smokes."—*L'Allegro*, 81.

105, 106. The order is line 106 and then 105:—Muttering his fancies, he would rove, hard by yon wood, now smiling, now drooping. **now ... Now**, at one time, at another. **as in scorn**, as if scornful; his smile did not indicate pleasure.

107. In the Pembroke MS. there is no comma after *drooping*, and there is a hyphen between woeful and wan. Mitford prints 'woful-wan,' but in the printed copies published in Gray's lifetime the line stands as in this edition. **woeful wan** means sad and pale, not 'wofully pale.'

108. **crazed** and **crossed** go with **one**,—'like one forlorn, or crazed, or crossed.' 'Crossed in love' is an idiom.

Wakefield quotes from Spenser, *January*, 8:—

> "For pale and *wan* he was, alas, the while!
> May seem he *loved* or else some *care* he took."

110. **Along the heath**, the reference is to the heath mentioned in the rejected stanza which came after line 100. **his fav'rite tree**, the tree that he was fond of lying under (lines 101-104); not necessarily that he preferred the beech to other kinds of trees, but this beech was his favourite resort.

111. **Another**, another morning.

105-112. These two stanzas form the inscription on the monument to Gray, in Stoke Park, on the side that faces the church.

114. **the church-way path**, the path leading (from the main road) to the church. Shakespeare has the phrase in *Midsummer Night's Dream*:—

> "Now it is the time of night
> That, the graves all gaping wide,
> Every one lets forth his sprite,
> In the *church-way paths* to glide."—v. 1. 386-389.

Gray may not have taken the words from Shakespeare; the graveyard at Stoke-Poges is reached by paths leading from the road; and it is one of these paths rather than a path in the graveyard that is referred to.

115. **for thou can'st read.** Mr. Hales considers that these words are introduced because "reading was not such a very common accomplishment then that it could be taken for granted"; and Mr. Rolfe because "the 'hoary-headed swain' of course could not read." I rather regard the clause as a poetical turn, a repetition that gives vividness to the speech of the old swain, and well brought in as he had not hitherto personally addressed the kindred spirit. Cf. the following from Milton and Young:—

> "And chiefly thou, O Spirit! ...
> Instruct me (for thou knowest) ... .—*Par. Lost*, i. 17, 19.
> "And steal (for you can steal) celestial fire."

lay is used for the sake of the rhyme, and not in its strict sense of song or lyrical poem, but here stands for verse or poetry; cf. *Ode for Music*, 14, and *Imitations from the Welsh*, 5.

116. **Graved** is seldom now used for 'carved' or 'cut'; the form 'engrave' is common, but generally applied to a particular kind of carving on wood, stone etc. **thorn**, a hawthorn tree.

In the Pembroke MS. of the *Elegy* Gray has entered after this stanza: "Insert

> There scattered oft, the earliest of the year,
> By hands unseen, are showers of violets found;
> The red-breast loves to build, and warble there,
> And little footsteps lightly print the ground."

This stanza, which may be described as 'the red-breast stanza,' was first printed (Mr. Gosse tells us, letter to the *Academy*, 18th March, 1889) in the *third* edition. This was within two months of the first publication in February, 1751, as Gray states, in the margin of the Pembroke MS. that it went through four editions in two months, and had reached eleven editions by 1753. Opposite this stanza in the Pembroke MS. Gray has written "Omitted, in 1753." Mason states that the reason for his omitting it was "because he thought that it was too long a paren-

thesis in this place." Another reason may be that this stanza was different in character from the preceding, as it dealt in fancies, whereas the former described facts. Also he may have noted the resemblance it bears to some expressions and lines in Collins' *Dirge in Cymbeline* (pub. 1747): —

> " Soft maids and village hinds shall bring
> Each opening sweet of *earliest* bloom. . . .
> The *red-breast* oft, at evening hours,
> Shall kindly lend its little aid," etc.

117. **the lap of Earth**, as if on his mother's lap. Cf. Spenser and Milton :—

> " For other beds the priests there usèd none,
> But on their mother Earth's dear lap did lie."
> *Faerie Queene*, v. 7. 9.
>
> " How gladly would I meet
> Mortality my sentence, and be earth
> Insensible ! How glad would lay me down
> As in my mother's lap ! There I should rest."
> *Par. Lost*, x. 775-778.

118. This line has become a hackneyed quotation. In Gray's translation of Propertius, he has—

> " Happy the youth, and not unknown to Fame."

119. **Science.** Knowledge in general; see *Ode on Eton*, 3, where it is applied to the learning that is to be had in that College. **frowned not on his birth**, looked favourably on him. Wakefield quotes from Horace :—

> " Quem tu, Melpomene, semel
> Nascentem placido lumine videris."—*Odes*, iv. 3.

Whom thou, Melpomene, may have looked on with a favourable eye at the hour of his birth.

120. **Melancholy marked him**, set her mark on him to show that he belonged to her. This is another allusion to a characteristic of Gray—the melancholy that he often refers to in his letters.

121. **Large was his bounty**, because it was all he had, viz. a tear.

123. **to Mis'ry**, to the wretched. **all he had.** Mitford and others misprint this by placing these words in brackets; it does not mean to say that 'he gave to Mis'ry a tear,' but he gave to Misery all he had, and that all was only a tear.

124. **a friend**, probably he means God himself.

127. **alike.** The merits equally with the frailties.

128. **bosom** is in apposition with **abode.**

VARIOUS READINGS.

Except where otherwise noted, the following 'various readings' are from the Original MS.

6. *All.* Now. 8. *And.* Or.—Egerton MS.

17. For ever sleep; the breezy call of Morn,
Or swallow etc.

19. Or chanticleer so shrill, or echoing horn.

24. *Or.* Nor. *Envied.* Coming.

25. *Sickle.* Sickles.—Egerton MS.

29. *Useful.* Homely. 30. *Homely.* Rustic.

37, 38. Forgive, ye proud, th' involuntary fault,
If Memory to these no trophies raise.—All MSS.

The present reading is written in the margin.

43. *Provoke.* Awake. 47. *Rod.* Reins.

51. *Repressed.* Had damped. 57. *Hampden.* Cato.

59. *Milton.* Tully. 60. *Cromwell.* Cæsar.

66. *Growing.* Struggling. 68. *And.* Or.—Egerton MS.

71. *Or heap.* And at the. *Shrine.* Shrines.—Egerton MS.

72. *With.* Burn. 74. *Learned.* Knew.

76. *Noiseless.* Silent. 79. *Rhimes.* Rhime.

82. *Elegy.* Epitaph.

92. And buried ashes glow with social fires.—Original MS.

And in our ashes glow their wonted fires.—Egerton and Pembroke MSS.

97. *May.* Shall.

99, 100. With hasty footsteps brush the dews away
On the high brow of yonder hanging lawn.

101. *There.* Oft. *Nodding.* Hoary.

105. *Hard by yon wood.* With gestures quaint.

106. *He would.* Would he.—Egerton and Pembroke MSS.

107. Now woeful wan he drooped, as one forlorn.

109. *I.* We. 110. By the heath-side and at his fav'rite tree.

113. *Due.* Meet. 116. *Graved.* Wrote. 121. *Soul.* Heart.

126, 127. Nor seek to draw them from their dread abode.
His frailties there in trembling hope repose.

XI.—A LONG STORY.

THE *Elegy* having been handed about in MS. by Horace Walpole was seen by Lady Cobham, then residing at the Mansion-house, Stoke Poges; being anxious to make the poet's acquaintance, she learned from the Rev. Mr. Purt of Stoke that the poet lived in the neighbourhood and was Mr. Gray, whom she did not know. This was in the summer of 1750, and two ladies who were stopping with her, Miss Speed and Lady Schaub, on the strength of the latter knowing Lady Brown, a friend of Gray's, called at his aunt's house, but the poet was not at home. He returned the call, and thus began his acquaintance and friendship with Lady Cobham and with Miss Speed, which resulted in his humorous account of his introduction to them, which he called *A Long Story*, and his *Amatory Lines* and the "Song" written at the request of Miss Speed, who afterwards became the Countess de Viry. See the Notes on the *Amatory Lines* and *Song*.

The *Long Story* was only once printed in Gray's lifetime, viz., in the edition with Bentley's *Designs* in 1753. In a letter to Dr. Beattie, dated 24th December, 1767, Gray says he had consented to let Dodsley reprint all he ever published "if he would omit entirely the *Long Story* (which was never meant for the public, and only suffered to appear in that pompous edition because of Mr. Bentley's designs, which were not intelligible without it)."

1. The first line of Parnell's *Fairy Tale* is :—

"In Britain's Isle and Arthur's days."

2. The mansion-house at Stoke-Poges, then in the possession of Viscountess Cobham. The house formerly belonged to the Earls of Huntingdon and the family of Hatton.—*Mason.*

Sir Edward Coke's mansion at Stoke-Poges, now the seat of Mr. Penn, was the scene of Gray's *Long Story*. The antique chimneys have been allowed to remain as vestiges of the Poet's fancy, and a column with a statue of Coke marks the former abode of its illustrious inhabitant.—*Mitford.*

The Mr. Penn who bought the mansion on the death of Lady Cobham in 1760, was a son of William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania, and it remained in the possession of the Penn family until 1848, when it was bought by the Rt. Hon. H. Labouchere (Baron Taunton), and by him sold to Mr. Edward Coleman, from whom it was purchased in 1887 by Mr. Wilberforce Bryant. For further information and illustrations of Stoke see the *Universal Review* for May, 1889, and *Cathedrals, Abbeys and Churches of England and Wales*, Cassell & Co., Part 13.

5. **fretted.** See the *Elegy*, 39, and note.

6. **panel.** See in Webster's *Dictionary* for the various meanings of this word, and cf. *empanel.* **achievement** is a term in heraldry

for 'an escutcheon or ensign armorial, now generally applied to the funeral shield commonly called *hatchment*.'

7. "And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light."—*Il Penseroso*, 159.

"Where awful arches make a noonday night,
And the dim windows shed a solemn light."—Pope, *Eloisa*, 142.

11. Hatton, preferred by Queen Elizabeth for his graceful person and fine dancing.—*Gray*.

The residence of Sir Christopher Hatton at Stoke is doubted by his biographer, Sir Harris Nicolas, who believes the tradition originated in the marriage of his widow with Sir E. Coke, to whom Stoke Mansion belonged, and by whom Queen Elizabeth was entertained there.

brawls were a sort of French figure-dance, then in vogue. See *England's Helicon* and Ben Jonson's *Masque*:—

"And thence did Venus learn to *lead*
The Idalian *brawls*."

12. **The seal.** The great seal, which is carried before the Lord Chancellor on official occasions. **maces**, a mace is a staff of office carried before some high officials. Milton represents Neptune with a mace, *Comus*, 869.

14, 15. **England's Queen.** Elizabeth. **Pope and Spaniard** etc. The allusion is to the Pope having excommunicated Elizabeth and to the Spanish Armada. **it**, the queen's heart. This stanza humorously describes Elizabeth's admiration for Sir Christopher.

17-20. In this stanza the poet supposes some one to find fault with him for digressing at the very beginning.

23. **A brace of warriors.** Lady Schaub and Miss Speed. **buff**, an old word for a military jacket, made of leather prepared from the skin of the *buffalo*.

25. **The first** etc. Lady Schaub's husband, Sir Luke Schaub, had been ambassador at Paris. **cap-a-pie**, armed from head to foot; it occurs in Shakespeare, and is generally used with 'armed,' which may be understood here; it is old French, the modern form being 'de pied en cap.'

28. **killing**, conquering, captivating, charming; a colloquial usage:—"Those eyes are made so *killing*."—*Pope*.

29-31. Miss Speed. She was brought up in the family of Lord Cobham after the death of her father, Col. Speed. Mason speaks of her as Lady Cobham's 'relation.' In a letter to Martha Blount, July 4, 1739, Pope, writing from Stowe, the seat of Lord Cobham, refers to Lady Cobham and Miss Speed being there.

32. **her arrows** etc. We speak of 'shafts of ridicule,' the 'arrows of one's satire,' etc.; the arrows of her wit were not tipped with poison but with goodnature.

35. **Melissa**, a beneficent fairy invented by the Italian poets. **Nom de Guerre.** Assumed name under which she fights; cf. *nom de plume.*

37. **capucine**, now spelt 'capuchin,' a cloak with a hood like that of the monks of the Capuchin order, so called from their wearing this garment; the primary root is *caput*, the head, just as hood is another form of head.

41. "It has been said that this gentleman, a neighbour and acquaintance of Gray's in the country, was much displeased with the liberty here taken with his name; yet, surely, without any great reason."—*Mason.*

"Mr. Robert Purt was Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, 1738; was an assistant master at Eton College, and tutor to Lord Baltimore's son there; in 1749 he was presented to the rectory of Settrington in Yorkshire. He died in April, 1752, of the smallpox."—*Isaac Reid.*

49. **My Lady**, Lady Cobham. **their joint petition**, the petition of the brace of warriors.

51. "Henry the Fourth, in the fourth year of his reign, issued out the following *commission* against this species of *vermin*:—'And it is enacted, that no master-rimour, minstrel, or other *vagabond*, be in any wise sustained in the land of Wales, to make commoiths, or gatherings upon the people there.' '*Vagabond*,' says Ritson, 'was a title to which the profession had been long accustomed.'

> 'Beggars they are with one consent,
> And rogues by act of parliament.'"—*Mitford.*

56. **bounce**, with a sudden jump; an adverb, like *whisk*, 79.

59. **Rummage**, examine closely, search; it literally means to make *room* for a thing, to move about and stow away so as to make room, hence, by moving things about, to examine them.

Gray's mother and aunt were living together at Stoke, and he was on a visit with them.

64. **tester**, the canopy over a bedstead, resting on the four bed posts; Fr. *tête*, the head.

66. **imbroglio**, or *embroglio*, a tangled mass; an Italian word; cf. *broil* and *embroil.*

67. "There is a very great similarity," says Mitford, "between the style of part of this poem and Prior's *Dove;* as for instance in the following stanzas, which Gray must have had in his mind at the time:—

> 'With one great peal they rap the door,
> Like footmen on a visiting day:
> Folks at her house at such an hour,
> Lord! what will all the neighbours say? . . .

'Her keys he takes, her door unlocks,
Thro' wardrobe, and thro' closet bounces,
Peeps into every chest and box,
Turns all her furbelows and flounces. . . .

'I marvel much, she smiling said,
Your poultry cannot yet be found.
Lies he in yonder slipper dead,
Or may be in the tea-pot drowned?'"

68. **dogs-ears.** The turned down corner of a page of a book is called a dog's-ear, because somewhat like it in shape. **a folio,** a book; Lat. *folium*, a leaf; books are described as folio, quarto (4to), octavo (8vo), sextodecimo (16mo) and 32mo, according as the paper of which they are made is folded once, twice (thus making *four* sheets, 4to), three times etc.; and so a folio is as a rule the tallest size of books, a size more common in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries than at present. This book is 8vo.

70. **The Muses** would naturally protect a poet, but were hopeless of his being pardoned for writing poetry.

71. **hoops,** crinoline; there is an amusing illustration of this verse in Bentley's *Designs*.

73. **Who will, believe.** Let him who will believe it believe it, or he may believe it who will.

74. **But that.** Supply 'says,'—Rumour says so, but says that etc.

75. **laughing in his sleeve,** an idiom, laughing so as not to be seen or heard; and from this idea of laughing secretly it comes to mean to be inwardly pleased at something we would not like others to know we were laughing at, *e.g.* their discomfiture or mistakes; here the poet laughed in his sleeve, or felt happy, at being safe from the 'brace of warriors,' though so near them when they were searching for him.

79. **whisk,** with a rapid movement; an adverb, cf. *bounce*, 56.

80. **a spell,** a writing that would have a magical effect; this refers to the little note that the ladies left for him, which ran as follows:—"Lady Schaub's compliments to Mr. Gray; she is sorry not to have found him at home, to tell him that Lady Brown is very well."

81, 82. **words,** object of **unriddle.** The poet, too eager to unriddle the words etc.

83, 84. **birdlime** and **chains,** a playful way of describing the contents of the note as evidently written to catch him like a bird, and cause him to come to their house; while the border of the paper is compared to chains that will have the same effect, but are invisible.

85. **apparatus**, a grand word like this, equivalent to machinery, is used in keeping with the burlesque account of the little incident.

86. **powerful** is the word usually applied to a spell or magic potion. **pothooks.** Letters the shape of a pothook, hence large or scrawling writing; the idea here is that it was intended to 'hook' him. The word occurs in Dryden:—"I long to be spelling her Arabic scrawls and pothooks."

87. **will he, nill he**, an adverbial phrase sometimes written *willy nilly*, whether he willed it or not, hence 'compulsorily'; **nill** means to be unwilling, from *ne*, not, and *will*, but is obsolete except in this phrase. The **Great-house**, the mansion house at Stoke where Lady Cobham lived.

88. As fast as he could, as if the devil were behind him.

89. **no sign of grace**, there being no sign of grace or pardon.

91. **Phœbus.** Apollo, the god of poetry.

95. **quiver** and **laurel.** Apollo was also the god of archery, and a crown of laurel was the reward at the games of Apollo.

97. **Culprit**, subject of 'was' understood.

100. **the gallery**, the picture gallery; we are now to suppose that the ladies in the large portraits, high dames of honour that lived as long ago as Queen Mary's time, come down from their pictures, or their spirits appear, as they often did, on dark and silent nights.

103. **Styack.** The house-keeper.—*Gray.*

In the elegant little edition of Gray's poems, published by Sharpe, with illustrations by Westall, in 1826, this name is printed Tyacke in the text, and there is the following foot-note:—"Her name which has hitherto, in all editions of Gray's Poems, been written Styack, is corrected from her gravestone in the churchyard, and the accounts of contemporary persons in the parish. House-keepers are usually styled Mrs.; the final *s* doubtless caused the name to be misapprehended and misspelt."

It is very probable that Gray mistook 'Mrs. Tyacke' for 'Mrs. Styacke,' as when he wrote the *Long Story* he had only just become acquainted with Lady Cobham's household. I see no necessity, however, for altering the name in the text; but the point is worth recording as it has never been referred to by any other editor of Gray. In the edition published by Bickers & Bush, 1858, with illustrations by Birket Foster, Tyacke is the reading in the text, without note.

112. **People of condition**, people of good condition or high rank.

115. "James Squibb was the son of Dr. Arthur Squibb, the descendant of an ancient family. Dr. Squibb graduated at Oxford, and was chaplain to Colonel Bellasis's regiment about

1685, and died in 1697. As he was in distressed circumstances towards the end of his life, his son, James, was apprenticed to an upholder in 1712; he attracted the notice of Lord Cobham, in whose service he continued for many years, and died at Stowe in June 1762."—*Nicolas.*

116. **could.** Might.—Pembroke MS.

126. **to save his bacon** is a colloquial phrase for to save himself or property; in old times, most country houses had a store of bacon or dried meat hung up, and the owners had to try to save it when robbers or soldiers on the march would come round for provisions.

129. **The ghostly Prudes,** the ghosts of the ladies in the portraits. **hagged.** Mason has the following note:—"The face of a witch or hag; the epithet haggard has been sometimes mistaken as conveying the same idea; but it means a very different thing, viz. wild and farouche, and is taken from an unreclaimed hawk, called a haggard, in which its proper sense the poet uses it finely on a sublime occasion." See *The Bard*, 18, and the note.

133. "The exclamation of the ghosts is characteristic of the Spanish manners of the age in which they are supposed to have lived."—*Mason.*

135. **the square-hoods,** the dames of honour in the portraits, so called from their wearing square or peaked hoods.

136. **clean,** entirely; an adverb; used in this sense in Shakespeare and the Bible, but now only colloquially:—"All the people were passed *clean* over Jordan."—*Joshua*, iii. 17.

139. Recommend me to her affable nature, which is equivalent to saying, 'I think she is exceedingly affable.'

140. This sentence is incomplete. It is intended to show the greatest surprise,—that her ladyship should speak to a commoner and a poet astonishes us beyond measure. A 'commoner' is any one who is not a peer, here = 'one not belonging to the nobility.'

Of course there were no stanzas lost; this is said to make it appear that the poem was as long as the occasion was important.

142. **longwinded,** a longwinded person is one who has wind or breath to talk long, hence tedious; the reference is to the great length of this *Long Story*, on the supposition that there were 500 stanzas more. **lubbers,** awkward persons; it occurs in Shakespeare, Dryden, and Milton:—

"Then lies him down the lubber-fiend."—*L'Allegro*, 110.

144. **keep** goes with **would**, that would sing for ever, and keep my lady from her rubbers, *i.e.* games at cards. A rubber is the best of three games, and the phrase is 'a rubber of whist.'

XII.—ODE FOR MUSIC.

THE full title of this Ode explains the occasion of its being written; it is:—Ode | Performed in the | Senate-House at Cambridge | July 1, 1769, | at the Installation of His Grace Augustus-Henry Fitzroy | Duke of Grafton | Chancellor of the University. | Set to Music by | Dr. Randal, | Professor of Music. | Cambridge | Printed for J. Archdeacon Printer to the University | 1769.

The Duke of Grafton, as Prime Minister, had in July, 1768, conferred on Gray the Professorship of Modern History at Cambridge, and when he was elected to succeed, as Chancellor, the Duke of Newcastle, who died in November, 1768, Gray determined to show his gratitude by writing the usual Installation Ode. He refers to it thus in a letter of July 16, 1769, to Dr. Beattie (author of *The Minstrel*):—"I thought myself bound in gratitude to his Grace, unasked, to take upon me the task of writing those verses which are usually set to music. I do not think them worth sending you, because they are by nature doomed to live but a single day; or, if their existence be prolonged beyond that date it is only by means of newspaper parodies and witless criticism. This sort of abuse I had reason to expect, but do not think it worth while to avoid." And in a note to Mr. Stonehewer, the Duke's secretary, to whom he sent the Ode in manuscript, on the 12th June, for the Duke's perusal, he says:—"I did not intend the Duke should have heard me till he could not help it. You are desired to make the best excuses you can to his Grace for the liberty I have taken of praising him to his face, but as somebody must necessarily do this I did not see why Gratitude should sit silent and leave it to Expectation to sing, who certainly would have sung, and that *à gorge déployée* upon such an occasion."

It was this Duke of Grafton to whom 'Junius' addressed some of his *Letters*. Here are two passages from them in strong contrast to Gray's eulogy:—"The first uniform principle, or, if I may call it, the genius, of your life has carried you through every possible change and contradiction of conduct, without the momentary imputation or colour of a virtue, and the wildest spirit of inconsistency has never once betrayed you into a wise or honourable action." And as regards his descent from royalty he tells him:—"The character of the *reputed* ancestors of some men has made it possible for their descendants to be vicious in the extreme without being degenerate. Those of your Grace, for instance, left no distressing example of virtue even to their *legitimate* posterity, and you may look back with pleasure to an illustrious pedigree, in which heraldry has left not one single good quality on record to insult or upbraid you."

The compliments Gray paid the Duke in this Ode led to a parody on the Epitaph in the *Elegy*, two of the lines in which are:—

"Smooth-tongued Flattery marked him for her own, . . .
He offered at Corruption's shrine."

This parody appeared in a newspaper in 1769, and is to be found cut out therefrom and pasted on the last page of Vol. II. of Upcott's edition of Gray in the British Museum. It is quoted in full in the new Aldine edition of Gray's *Poems*, edited by me.

Gray finished the Ode in April, 1769; it was his last poetical composition, and except the Odes from the Norse and the Welsh, written in 1761 and 1764, he had published nothing new for twelve years, *i.e.* since the *Progress of Poesy* and the *Bard* appeared in 1757.

The *Ode for the Installation* was published by the University in quarto, the second title being "Ode for Music." It was never edited by Gray, and when Mason published it in his editions of Gray's Poems, he entitled it simply "For Music," and added, the epithet "Irregular"; he also, "for the sake of uniformity in the page, divided the Ode into stanzas, and discarded the musical divisions of Recitative, Air, and Chorus." Mason has been followed in most of these changes, and in no edition has the Ode been printed, as now, with the divisions etc., as it appeared when first published.

A still more noteworthy point is that Gray has been credited with some of Mason's work. There were no notes in the University edition of the Ode, but Mason wrote notes in the manner of the historical notes which Gray wrote for the *Bard*, and placed them as footnotes to the Ode in his edition of 1775, and Gray's notes on the other poems as footnotes in their proper places; he also had additional notes of his own as an appendix. With the exception of Mathias, *every* editor of Gray concluded that the footnotes to the Ode were by Gray, and all the notes which I have marked *Mason*, from line 41 to 84, are in all other editions (except Mathias') marked *Gray*. The note on 'Elizabeth de Burg' ought to have led them to suspect that the reference to "the poet" was not by Gray; still stranger is it that it has escaped so many editors to the present day that Mason states in the appendix that the notes are by himself:—"I have added," he says, "at the bottom of the page a number of explanatory notes, which this Ode seemed to want still more than that which preceded it [the *Bard*]; especially when given not to the University only, but the public in general, who may be reasonably supposed to know little of the particular founders of different colleges and their history here alluded to."

1. **avaunt**, be off. Fr. *avant*, before. *Hence* and *avaunt* are interjections here and used like imperatives,—get you away Comus and Ignorance and Sloth etc. Cf. Virgil:—"Procul, O procul este profani."—*Æneid*, vi. 258.

2. **Comus**. The god of mirth; *comedy* comes from the same root; he was also the god of riot and intemperance. **midnight**

32. **Cynthia.** The moon, so called from Mount Cynthus in Delos, the birthplace of Artemis and Apollo.

35. **the portals sound,** *i.e.* the doors are opened. *Portals* occurs only twice in *Paradise Lost*, iii. 508, vii. 575, and in each place refers to the gates of heaven; and in this sense Gray uses it again in his lines in the epitaph on Mrs. Mason.

36. **slow** goes with **steps**; cf. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, xii. 648:—

"They, hand in hand, *with wandering steps and slow.*"

38. **mitred fathers,** high ecclesiastics.

39. "Edward the Third, who added the *fleur-de-lys* of France to the arms of England. He founded Trinity College."—*Mason.* Mitford quotes from Denham:—

"*Great Edward,* and thy greater son,
He that the *lilies* wore, and he that won."

41. "Mary de Valentia, Countess of Pembroke, daughter of Guy de Chatillon, Comte de St. Paul in France; of whom tradition says that her husband, Audemar de Valentia, Earl of Pembroke, was slain at a tournament on the day of his nuptials. She was the foundress of Pembroke College or Hall, under the name of Aula Mariæ de Valentia."—*Mason.*

42. "Elizabeth de Burg, Countess of Clare, was wife of John de Burg, son and heir of the Earl of Ulster, and daughter of Gilbert de Clare, Earl of Gloucester, by Joan of Acres, daughter of Edward the First. Hence the poet gives her the epithet of 'princely.' She founded Clare Hall."—*Mason.*

43. "Margaret of Anjou, wife of Henry the Sixth, foundress of Queen's College. The poet has celebrated her conjugal fidelity in the former Ode (*The Bard*, 89)."—*Mason.* **the paler Rose.** "Elizabeth Widville, wife of Edward the Fourth, hence called the paler rose, as being of the House of York. She added to the foundation of Margaret of Anjou."—*Mason.*

45. "Henry the Sixth and Eighth. The former the founder of King's, the latter the greatest benefactor to Trinity College."—*Mason.* **either.** Each, the one and the other; *either* is properly one of two; but in old writers and in poetry is used for each of two:—

"In either hand the hastening angel caught
Our lingering parents."—*Par. Lost*, xii. 637.

47. Referring to the denial by Henry VIII. of the ecclesiastical supremacy of the Pope.

49. This life with its sorrows and joys having passed away.

50. **Charity, that glows** etc. Cf. "Warm Charity," *Hymn to Adversity;* and "Charity never faileth," 1 *Corinthians*, xiii. 8.

51. **All** is the subject of *come.* **Granta.** An old name for the river Cam, here put for the University.

52. **regal bounty,** the bounty of the kings and queens referred to in lines 39 to 47 as founders of the Colleges.

'at,—'all those who poured rich
'e fanes and turrets rise.' **fane** is
'ans the Colleges, the temples of
'e-inspiring, from their greatness,
'd to be erected; to *rise* is thus
to the erection of buildings :—
fabric huge
'—*Par. Lost*, i. 710, 711.
'*their* Fitzroy,' he belonged
'oming its Chancellor.
on,' *Ode on the Spring*, 27,
' the nightingale :—
'e of day."—*Sonnet*, i. 5.
24. 3.
at well-known passage
'm :—
rising sweet
coming on

-iv. 641-656.

. .

"—*Don Juan.*
fall, cadence,

'*ilia's Day.*

'44.

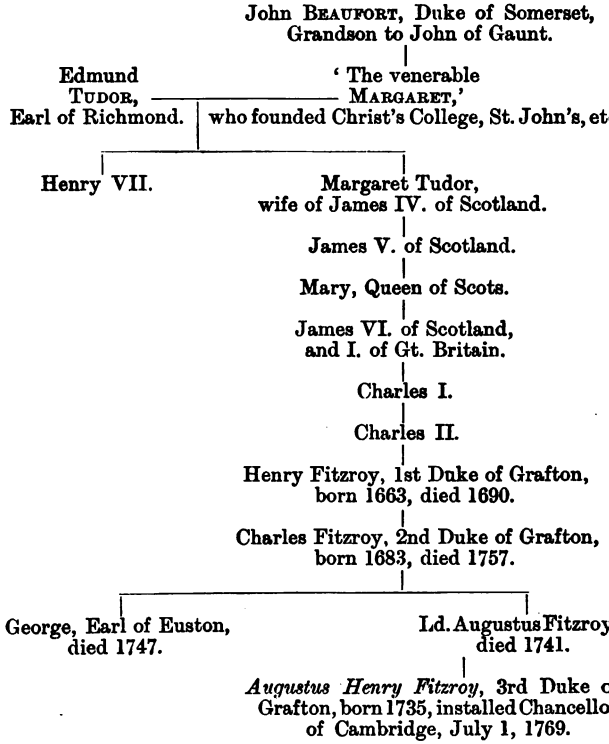
66. "Countess of Richmond and Derby; the mother of Henry the Seventh, foundress of St. John's and Christ's Colleges."—*Mason.*

68. **train**, company. **and me**, and welcome to me.

70. "The Countess was a Beaufort, and married to a Tudor; hence the application of this line to the Duke of Grafton, who claims descent from both these families."—*Mason.*

In the volume in the British Museum (No. 840, l. 5) which contains Gray's *Odes*, Ed. 1757, there is, in neat handwriting on a fly-leaf at the end, the following genealogical tree drawn out to illustrate the lines,

" Pleased in thy lineaments we trace
A Tudor's fire, a Beaufort's grace."



72. **The flower unheeded,** the flower that is unseen.

75. **the latent gem,** the gem that lies hid. The stanza means 'Thy discriminating eye will find out men of genius, who would otherwise be unknown, and will raise them to places of honour and usefulness.' He reproduces his simile of the 'gem and the flower' from the *Elegy*, 53-56.

78. This line is taken from Adam's description of Eve :—

"Not obvious, not obtrusive, but retired."
Par. Lost, viii. 1504.

obvious, used in its literal sense, in the way, thrusting herself forward, the same idea as in *obtrusive*.

79. **incense,** flattery; see *Elegy*, 71, 72, and note.

83. **modest pride** is another of the attributes of Eve, *Par. Lost*, iv. 310. **youthful,** the new Chancellor was 34 years of age, about 20 years younger than Gray.

84. "Lord Treasurer Burleigh was Chancellor of the University in the reign of Queen Elizabeth."—*Mason*.

laureate wreath is from Milton: — "Worcester's *laureate wreath*," *Sonnet to Cromwell*.

86. **the fasces** were a bundle of rods with an axe tied up with them which was carried before the Roman magistrates as an emblem of their authority; hence 'fasces of her sway' is here equivalent to 'rod of office.' Mitford quotes Dryden :—

"And with a *willing hand* restores
The *fasces* of the main."—*Thren. August*, 284.

89. The words are from Milton again,—*Comus* :—

"Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar."—87.

92. This means 'guide the ship of state safely,' in allusion to the Duke being Prime Minister; the idea is from Horace :—

"Neque altum
Semper urgendo, neque, dum procellas
Cautus horrescis, nimium premendo
Littus iniquum."—*Odes*, ii. 10.

93. **The Star of Brunswick** etc. This is a double compliment to the King and to the Prime Minister. 'The star that guides your royal master is now in the ascendant, and shines brightly to guide you in steering the ship of state.' Mitford refers to Pope, *Essay on Criticism* :—

"The mighty Stagyrite first left the shore,
Spread all his sails, and durst the deeps explore;
He steered securely, and discovered far,
Led by the light of the Mœonian star."—645.

20. Luke quotes from Dryden :—

"Heaven, that but once was *prodigal* before,
To Shakespeare gave as much, she could not give
him more."—*To my Friend, Mr. Congreve.*

21-24. The thought in this stanza and the remarkable expression 'luxury of light' occur in Gray's translation of a passage in Tasso, which he made while a student in Cambridge in 1738. The lines are :—

"The diamond there attracts the wondrous sight,
Proud of its thousand dies, and luxury of light."

In Mitford's *Life of Gray*, in the Eton edition, he tells us he remembers hearing Dr. Edward Clarke, when Professor of Mineralogy, finish one of his lectures with the eight concluding lines of this translation of Tasso, and rest on the beautiful expression in the last line, quoted above, with peculiar enunciation.

26. The corner of the last stanza of the only existing MS. was torn off when Mason found it, and these stanzas are incomplete. Mason filled up the blanks thus, observing that he was "not quite satisfied with the words inserted in the third line":—

"Enough for me, if to some feeling breast
My lines a secret sympathy *impart;*
And as their pleasing influence *flows confest,*
A sigh of soft reflection *heaves the heart.*"

Mitford says :—"I do not consider that he has been successful in the selection of the few words which he had added to supply the imperfect lines: my own opinion is, that Gray had in his mind Dryden's *Epistle to Kneller*, from which he partly took his expressions; under the shelter of that supposition, I shall venture to give another reading :—

'Enough for me, if to some feeling breast
My lines a secret sympathy *convey;*
And as their pleasing influence *is exprest,*
A sigh of soft reflection *dies away.*"

XV.—ODE ON THE PLEASURE ARISING FROM VICISSITUDE.

This Ode was left unfinished by Gray; it was first published by Mason in his *Memoirs* of Gray, 1775, and he "had the boldness to attempt to finish it himself, making use of some other lines and broken stanzas which Gray had written." Almost every editor of Gray's *Poems* has reprinted this Ode as defaced by Mason.

Gray wrote what we have of this Ode probably in the winte of 1754-55. In a letter to Dr. Wharton, dated 9th March, 1755 he speaks of his objection to publishing the Ode on the *Progres of Poesy* alone; and adds:—"I have two or three ideas more i my head"; "one of these," says Mason, "was unquestionably thi Ode,—since I found in his memorandum book, of 1754, a sketc of his design as follows:—Contrast between the winter pas and coming spring.—Joy owing to that vicissitude.—Many tha never feel that delight.—Sloth.—Envy.—Ambition. How muc happier the rustic that feels it, though he knows not how."

2. **dew-bespangled.** Cf. Milton's compounds, 'knot-grass *dew besprent*,' *Comus*, 542; '*dewy-feathered* sleep,' *Il Penseroso*, 146.

3. **vermeil,** bright red; *vermeil* is a French word used i Spenser and Milton and other poets after them; the moder word is *vermilion; vermeil* is derived from Lat. *vermes*, a worm the insect from which the dye was obtained. In **vermeil cheel** there is a reminiscence of the well-known lines in *Comus* abou the 'cheeks of sorry grain' and '*vermeil-tinctured* lips,' 752.

4. Luke quotes from the *Hippolytus* of Seneca:—"*Rorifer* mulcens aura, Zephyrus vernas evocat herbas."—i. 11.

9. Mitford quotes from *Lucretius*:—

> . . . "Hinc *nova proles*,
> *Artubus infirmis*, teneras lasciva per herbas
> Ludit."—i. 260.

13, 14. **warbles** ... **His** ... **thrilling ecstasy.** See the note on *The Bard*, 133; *Descent of Odin*, 24; *Progress of Poesy*, 96.

16. **liquid light** occurs in *Par. Lost*, vii. 362, and cf. 'liquid noon,' *Ode on the Spring*, 27, and note.

13-16. Cf. Wordsworth's *To a Skylark*:—

> "To the last point of vision, and beyond,
> Mount, daring *warbler!*—that love-prompted strain ...
> *Thrills* not the less the bosom of the plain."

17. "I have heard Gray say, that Gresset's *Epitre à ma Sœu* gave him the first idea of this Ode; and whoever compares it with the French poem will find some slight traits of resemblance, but chiefly in our author's seventh stanza."—*Mason.*

Mitford quotes the following lines from Gresset:—

> "Mon âme, trop long tems flétrie
> Va de nouveau s'épanouir;
> Et loin de toute réverie
> Voltiger avec le Zéphire,
> Occupé tout entier du soin du plaisir d'être," etc.

18. Cf. the first line of the *Stanzas to Mr. Bentley.*

21. See note on **sullen,** *Imitations from the Welsh*, and cf. Milton, *Sonnet*, xx., "Help waste a *sullen* day."

25. **raptures**, joyous sounds.

26. Have no recollection of the past or fear of the future.

28. "Sure he that made us with such large discourse
Looking before and after."—*Hamlet*, iv. 4. 37.

"We look *before and after*,
And pine for what is not."—Shelley, *To a Skylark.*

29, 30. The hand of Reflection can trace smiles on the brow of past Misfortune; *i.e.* when we look back on the days of our misfortune we can see that they were not entirely unhappy.

34-36. Hope gilds the deepest shades with a gleam of light in the future.

29-36. This stanza is an expansion of lines 25-28; beasts and birds have no yesterday or to-morrow, but man has both Reflection and Hope.

37. **Still**, always.

42. **Chastised**, 'chastened' would now be used in this secondary sense. **sabler**, darker; the adjective *sable* is generally used in the poets for a funeral black, the colour of mourning.

43. **blended** agrees with **hues**; the hues of bliss and woe blended together. **with artful strife**, skilfully contending with one another (as to which should excel the other).

45-52. This is one of the finest stanzas in Gray's poetry, and is quite distinct in tone from the artificial poetry of the eighteenth century, resembling in sentiment and in the ring of the verse Wordsworth's *Intimations of Immortality*, the last lines of which may have been borrowed in part from this passage of Gray:—

"To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

55. **crystalline**, a Miltonic word, 'crystalline sphere,' *Par. Lost*, iii. 482; 'the crystalline sky,' vi. 772; 'crystalline ocean,' vii. 271; the 'cool crystalline stream,' *Samson Agonistes*, 546.

The following incomplete lines are in Gray's MS. Mason filled up the gaps, and added three stanzas more.

"Far below the crowd,
Where broad and turbulent it grows
with resistless sweep
They perish in the boundless deep.
Mark where Indolence and Pride,
Softly rolling, side by side,
Their dull, but daily round."

XVI.—EPITAPH ON MRS. CLARKE.

THIS epitaph is on a mural tablet of slate and marble in the Church at Beckenham, Kent. The inscription is—

JANE CLARKE

Died April 27, 1757. Aged 31.

and then follow the verses in two columns.

The epitaph was first printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for October, 1774.

Mason's note is: "This Lady, the wife of Dr. Clarke, Physician at Epsom, died April 27, 1757, and is buried in the Church of Beckenham, Kent."

Subsequent editors have repeated his note, but the fact that the epitaph is on a tablet in the church, and that it appeared in print before Mason's edition of Gray, has not been recorded before. Clarke was a college friend of Gray's.

1. **this silent marble weeps.** This was a common poetical phrase last century in speaking of monuments to the dead.

6. **soft humanity.** Mitford cites lines from Dryden and Pope in which this phrase occurs.

7-10. Mitford gives the six following lines as in a manuscript copy instead of lines 7 to 10 as finally decided on :—

" To hide her cares her only art,
Her pleasure, pleasures to impart,
In ling'ring pain, in death resigned,
Her latest agony of mind
Was felt for him, who could not save
His all from an untimely grave."

9. **Her infant image** etc. Mrs. Clarke died in childbirth, but the infant survived her.

XVII.—EPITAPH ON A CHILD.

THIS epitaph was written at the request of Dr. Wharton, whose then only son died in infancy in April, 1758. Gray describes his difficulty in writing it in a letter to Wharton, dated June 18, 1758, as follows :—" You flatter me in thinking that anything I can do could at all alleviate the just concern your late loss has given you ; but I cannot flatter myself so far, and know how little qualified I am at present to give any satisfaction to myself on this head, and in this way, much less to you. I by no means pretend to inspiration, but yet I affirm that the faculty in question is by no means voluntary. It is the result, I suppose, of a certain disposition of mind, which does not depend on oneself, and which I have not felt this long time. You that are

a witness how seldom this spirit has moved me in my life, may easily give credit to what I say."

It is here printed from a copy in the Mitford MSS., now in the British Museum (32, 561, Add. MSS.). Mitford has entered it in two places in his volume of MSS.; at p. 74 with the note,—"N.B. in Gray's writing"; and at p. 182, "Not in Gray's writing." The former version, therefore, I have followed.

It was first printed by Mr. Gosse (1884) "from a copy in the handwriting of Alexander Dyce, lately found slipped into a book at South Kensington, and made by him when the original MS. was sold in 1854."

Each of the three copies differs slightly from the others. In line 1 there is a comma after 'Here' in the Dyce copy; and it is 'free from pain,' in Mitford No. 2, p. 182. In line 8 in the Dyce copy it is 'Now' instead of 'Here'; and in Mitford No. 2 it is 'the Night of Death.' Also in the Mitford copies almost every substantive begins with a capital letter.

XVIII.—SKETCH OF HIS OWN CHARACTER.

1. "This is similar to a passage in one of Swift's letters to Gay, speaking of poets: 'I have been considering why poets have such ill success in making their court. They are too libertine to haunt ante-chambers, *too poor to bribe* porters, and *too proud to cringe* to second-hand favourites in a great family.' See Pope's *Works*, xi. 36, ed. Warton."—*Mitford.*

importune must here be pronounced with the accent on the second syllable, for the sake of the rhyme.

4. This means—'I am not like some of the wits of the day who profess not to believe in God.'

6. **Charles Townshend** was Chancellor of the Exchequer in Chatham's last ministry (1767). Horace Walpole regarded him as scarcely inferior to Charles James Fox in wit and forensic ability; and Macaulay calls him the most brilliant and versatile of mankind, adding that he 'belonged to every party and cared for none.'

Squire. Dr. Samuel Squire, at that time Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, and afterwards Bishop of St. David's. He died in 1766.

Some editors suppose that Goldsmith took these lines as the model of his character of Burke in *Retaliation;* but the latter was published in April, 1774, and Gray's lines did not appear till printed in Mason's edition in 1775 (as a footnote to a letter dated August, 1758).

XIX.--EPITAPH ON SIR W. WILLIAMS.

Sir William Peere Williams, Bart., was killed at the siege of Belleisle, 1761. "In the recklessness of a desponding mind, he approached too near to the enemy's sentinels, and was shot through the body." Walpole describes Williams as "a gallant and ambitious young man, who had devoted himself to war and politics." He was a Captain in Burgoyne's Dragoons, raised in 1759, now the 16th Lancers; see the *Graphic*, 4th April, 1891.

A letter of Gray's to Mason, in August, 1761, gives the date of the composition of this epitaph, and contains the following remarks of Gray on it:—"Mr. Montagu (as I guess at your instigation) has earnestly desired me to write some lines to be put on a monument which he means to erect at Belleisle. It is a task I do not love, knowing Sir William Williams so slightly as I did; but he is so friendly a person, and his affliction seemed to me so real, that I could not refuse him. I have sent him the following verses, which I neither like myself nor will he, I doubt; however, I have showed him that I wished to oblige him. Tell me your real opinion."

Writing to Brown on the 23rd October, 1760, Gray says:—"In my way to town I met with the first news of the expedition from Sir William Williams, who makes a part of it, and perhaps may lay his fine Vandyck head in the dust."

Mr. Gosse gives June 13 as the date on which Williams was killed; but the French had capitulated on the 7th June. In the *Gentleman's Magazine*, under date 7th May, it is stated, "an express brought advice that Sir W. P. Williams had been killed reconnoitering." In a letter to Brown, dated 26th May, 1761, Gray writes:—"Montagu had thoughts of going thither [Cambridge] with me, but I know not what his present intentions may be. He is in real affliction for the loss of Sir W. Williams, who has left him one of his executors, and (as I doubt his affairs were a good deal embarrassed) he possibly may be detained in town on that account."

I have followed the version of this Epitaph in the Mitford MSS. (British Museum), as Mitford apparently took it from the letter which Gray sent to Mason, both in his book of MSS. and in his *Correspondence of Gray and Mason*, p. 268. This differs from that published by Mason in three places in the second stanza, and I believe that it is most likely that Mason, acting on Gray's request for his "real opinion," took the liberty, as he did in several other instances, of altering the wording when he printed it among Gray's *Poems* in 1775.

5. "In the expedition to Aix he was on board the 'Magnanime' with Lord Howe, and was deputed to receive the capitulation."—*Mason.*

5, 6. Mason printed these two lines thus:—

"At Aix his voluntary sword he drew,
There first in blood his infant honour sealed";

and has been followed by all subsequent editors. Sir W. Scott probably took from it the similar expression in *Marmion*:—

"Since, riding side by side, our hand
First *drew the voluntary brand*."—C. iv. Introduction, 10.

9. Intrepid. Mason and others have *undaunted*.

10. Victor. Belleisle had not surrendered at the time that Williams was killed, but he calls him 'victor' as belonging to the side that was ultimately victorious, and also for poetical effect and as more calculated to call forth sympathy that he should have met his death instead of returning home with the victorious troops.

Belleisle is a fortified island off the coast of France, in the north of the Bay of Biscay.

XX.—THE DEATH OF HOEL.

THIS and the *Imitations from the Welsh* were probably written about the same time, 1764, as the *Triumphs of Owen*, and inspired, like it, by Evans' *Specimens of the Welsh Poetry*.

The original Welsh is by Aneurin, who flourished about the time of Taliessin, A.D. 570. Gray's version is from the Latin translation in Evans' *Specimens*.

"Aneurin with the flowing Muse, King of Bards, brother to Gildas Albanius the historian, lived under Mynyddawg of Edinburgh, a prince of the North, whose Eurdorchogion, or warriors wearing the golden torques, 363 in number, were all slain, except Aneurin and two others, in a battle with the Saxons at Cattraeth, on the eastern coast of Yorkshire. His *Gododin*, a heroic poem written on that event, is perhaps the oldest and noblest production of that age."—Jones, *Relics*.

1. **Had I but.** Oh, if I had only,—a form of expressing a wish.

3. "The kingdom of Deïra included the counties of Yorkshire, Durham, Lancashire, Westmoreland, and Cumberland."—Jones, *Relics*.

5. **secure**, careless, *i.e.* without care, confident; Lat. *se*, without, and *cura*; commonly used thus in Shakespeare, Milton, etc.

7-10. He asked no dowry with the daughter of Madoc, but asked for and had her (for his bride), endowed only with the gifts of nature.

9. **Alone**, only; adverb qualifying 'Nature's wealth.' **arrayed** agrees with **maid**.

11. **Cattraeth.** Catterick, in the valley of the Swale, near Richmond, in Yorkshire.

12. Gray gives the number in round numbers to suit his verse; in the Latin it is 'tricenti et sexaginta tres,' 363.

14. Collars of gold were badges of distinction amongst Keltic nations.

16-18. These three lines are a rather unnecessary expansion, in so short a piece, of three words in the Latin,—'nimio potu madidi,' which might have been translated by 'flushed with wine,' as line 19 also is not in the original.

18. **ecstatic,** causing ecstasy.

23. **And I.** It should be *me,* 'save me'; but *I* sounds more emphatic here; the Latin is:—'Non evasere nisi tres, Acron et Conanus, et egomet ipse.' Cf. a similar license in *Paradise Lost*:—

"Of those too high aspiring, who rebelled
With Satan,—*he,* who envies now thy state."— vi. 900.

XXI.—IMITATIONS FROM THE WELSH.

1. **tusky.** In Webster's *Dictionary* another instance is given from Dryden:—

"The scar indented by the *tusky boar.*"

2. **sullen** originally means lonely (through the French, from the Lat. *solus*); hence gloomy; Milton applies it to a wintry day, and Gray follows him in speaking of the 'sullen year,' *Ode on Vicissitude,* 21; 'with sullen roar' he also takes from Milton:—

"I hear the far-off curfew sound,
Over some wide-watered shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar."—*Il Penseroso,* 76.

5. **rehearse.** Cf. 'repeat their Chiefs and Loves,' *Progress of Poesy,* 60.

6. **Build the lofty verse.** The expression is from *Lycidas*:—

"He knew
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme."—10, 11.

And before Milton we have it in Horace and Spenser:—

"Seu *condis* amabile *carmen.*"—*Epistola,* I. iii. 25.

"To *build* with level of my *lofty* style."—*Ruins of Rome,* 2.

12. **shivered,** shattered by lightning.

14. **crimson.** See the *Fatal Sisters,* 36, and *Triumphs of Owen,* 29.

XXIII.—VERSES FROM WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

THESE verses were sent from Hartlepool to Mason in a letter dated July 16, 1765. They were first published in Mitford's *Correspondence of Gray and Mason*, 1853.

The letter begins with the verses, and then proceeds to say:—"Tell me if you do not like this, and I will send you a worse. I rejoice to hear your eyes are better, as much as if they were my own." Mason acknowledged it on the 22nd July, saying, "As bad as your verses were they are yours, and, therefore, when I get back to York, I will paste them carefully in the first page of my Shakespeare to enhance its value. . . . You will not pity me now, no more than you did when I was in residence and sore eyes."

I have followed the copy given in Mitford's *Correspondence of Gray and Mason*, p. 339; but in the Mitford MSS. in the British Museum there is another copy with several variations which I shall note in their places.

1. **Mistress Anne.** Mason's servant at York.

2. **clack**, noise, clatter, chatter.

3. **right proper man**, this is an archaic expression, and here simply means 'a real man' (not a mere book or a name). *right* is an adverb, 'truly,'—"*right* fat."—Chaucer. *proper*, 'well-formed':—"Thou art a *proper* man."—Chaucer. "Moses was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a *proper* child."—*Hebrews*, xi. 23.

5. **cankered.** In the Mitford MSS. it is 'crabbed.'

6, 7. The references are to the editions of Shakespeare published by Rowe, 1709; Pope, 1721; Theobald, 1733 (an attorney); Sir Thomas Hanmer, 1743 (a 'baronet'); Warburton, 1747 (a 'parson'); and Dr. Johnson, 1765 (a 'small poet'). Steevens', published in 1766, and Capell's, 1767, were probably announced as in preparation when Gray wrote these lines.

8. **worst of all.** 'Worse than all' in the Mitford MSS.

9. **our master.** Mason, the servant's master, and the owner of the copy of Shakespeare.

12. **residence.** Mason was Precentor of York, and 'Residentiary' at the cathedral; in a letter of Gray's (October 19, 1763) he refers to Mason's "repining at his four and twenty weeks' *residence* at York, unable to visit his bowers, the work of his own hands, at Aston." **marriage.** Mason, at the time Gray sent these verses, was engaged to be married, and his marriage took place on the 25th of September. **sore eyes.** In the Mitford MSS. it is 'mince pies'; but sore eyes is evidently

the correct reading as shown by the extracts from the letters quoted above.

15. When he is in the cathedral.

17-20. In the Mitford MSS. this verse is the third.

21. **Clouet** was a celebrated cook; the meaning is, people in York will taste cakes and pies that even Clouet never heard of —being made with the help of Shakespeare, *i.e.* of the paper of a copy of Shakespeare.

In the British Museum there is the copy of Verral's *Cookery* which belonged to Gray. The title is—*A Complete System of Cookery, in which is set forth a variety of genuine receipts collected from several years' experience under the celebrated M. de St. Clouet, sometime since Cook to his Grace the Duke of Newcastle, by William Verral, Master of the White Hart Inn in Lewes, Sussex*, 1759." This copy contains several receipts in Gray's handwriting; it subsequently belonged to Mitford.

22. **works.** In the Mitford MS. it is 'work'; and instead of *fumes* the word seems to be '*views*.'

23. **Nancy.** Another form of Anne, as a dissyllable is required.

24. **For ... puddings.** The Mitford MS. has "To ... cheese-cakes."

XXIII.—AMATORY LINES.

THESE verses were first printed by Warton in his edition of Pope's *Works*, 1797, as a footnote to Pope's *Imitations of English Poets*, with this note:—"In the following love-verses is a strain of sensibility which the reader will be pleased, I suppose, to see, being now first published from a manuscript of Mr. Gray."

The original MS. was presented by the Countess de Viry (Miss Speed), with the ensuing "Song," to the Rev. Mr. Leman when he visited her in 1780, and by him they were given to Warton.

It is probable that like the *Song* and the *Rondeau*, they were written at the request of this lady, of whom Gray says in the *Long Story*,—"Alas, who would not wish to please her!"

The first edition of Gray's *Poems* in which these verses appeared was Stephen Jones', 1800. Jones gave them the title of *The Enquiry*, observing, "the following amatory lines having been found among the MSS. of Gray, but bearing no title, I have ventured, for the sake of uniformity in this volume, to prefix the above"; and Mitford (ed. 1814) gave them the title of *Amatory Lines*, by which they have been known ever since.

7. **fellow-swains.** See the note on *swain* in the *Elegy*, 97.

XXV.—SONG.

In a brief memoir of Gray by Horace Walpole, prefixed to Mitford's *Correspondence of Gray and Mason*, Walpole says:—"In October, 1761, he made words for an old tune of Geminiani, at the request of Miss Speed. It begins—

'Thyrsis, when we parted, swore.'

Two stanzas—the thought adapted from the French."

In a long note to the *Long Story*, in the edition of Gray's *Poetical Works* published by Sharpe, 1826, after referring to the fact that his "gallantry had no deeper root than the complaisance of friendship," the anonymous editor proceeds to say:—"Another erroneous surmise of the same nature [*i.e.* that he was in love with Miss Speed] might be formed on hearing (what nevertheless is true) that the beautiful rondeau, which appears in the later editions of his works, was inspired by the 'wish to please' this lady. The fact is, however, that it was produced (and probably about this time) on a request she made to the poet one day, when he was in company with Mr. Walpole, that she might possess something from his pen on the subject of love... It was in the year 1780 that Miss Speed (then Countess de Viry) enabled the lovers of poetry to see in print the *Rondeau*, and another small amatory poem of Gray's, called *Thyrsis*, by presenting them to the Rev. Mr. Leman, of Suffolk, while on a visit at her castle in Savoy. She died there in 1783."

The following references to Miss Speed in Gray's *Letters* are interesting. In June, 1760, writing to Wharton, he says:—"I remain... still in town, though for these three weeks I have been going into Oxfordshire with Madam Speed... She has got at least £30,000 with a house in town, plate, jewels, china and old japan infinite [left by Lady Cobham]." On Oct. 21, 1760:—"You astonish me in wondering that my Lady Cobham left me nothing. For my part, I wondered to find that she had given me £20 for a ring, as much as she gave to several of her own nieces. The world said before her death that Miss Speed and I had shut ourselves up with her in order to make her will, and that afterwards *we were to be married.*" In Jan., 1761:—"My old friend Miss Speed has done what the world would call a very foolish thing. She has married the Baron de la Peyriere, son to the Sardinian Minister, the Comte de Viry. The Castle of Viry is in Savoy, a few miles from Geneva, commanding a fine view of the Lake."

It would seem that there were two or three manuscript copies of this Song. It was published in Horace Walpole's *Works*, in his Letters to the Countess of Ailesbury, and that copy was followed by Mitford, and is identical with the version in Mr. Gosse's edition "printed from a copy by Stonehewer at Pembroke College."

1. **Thyrsis** is the name of a shepherd in Theocritus and Vergil; it is used in Milton's *L'Allegro*, 83, for a shepherd or rustic, and in the pastoral and amatory poetry of the eighteenth century is used to designate a lover.

Various Readings.

In Stephen Jones' edition, in which he states that this song then appears for the first time among Gray's poems, there are the following variations from the usual text:—

1. **when we parted.** When he left me. 2. **Ere.** In.

3. **yon violet flower.** The opening flower.

Line 5 comes after line 6.

8. **this.** Such.

9. **Western.** Gentle. **skies.** Sky.

10. **Speak.** Prove.

There is also a copy in Mitford's MSS. (32. 561), which has the following variations in the second verse, the tenth and the last line being differently worded:—

7. **green.** Bloom. 9. **Western.** Warmer.

10. Cannot prove that winter's past.

12. Dare not to reproach my love.

XXV.—COUPLET ABOUT BIRDS.

This couplet was first published in Mathias' edition of Gray's Works (1814), vol. ii., p. 596, introduced thus:—"One fine morning in the spring Mr. Nicholls was walking in the neighbourhood of Cambridge with Mr. Gray, who, feeling the influence of the season, and cheered with the melody of birds on every bough, turned round to his friend, and expressed himself extempore in these beautiful lines." Mathias, no doubt, based his remarks on Norton Nicholls' *Reminiscences of Gray*, written in 1805, the MS. of which was in his possession,—Nicholls' reference to them being:—"Two verses made by Mr. Gray as we were walking in the spring in the neighbourhood of Cambridge."

Norton Nicholls' *Reminiscences* was first printed by Mitford in vol. v. of his *Works of Gray*, published by Bell & Daldy in 1843.

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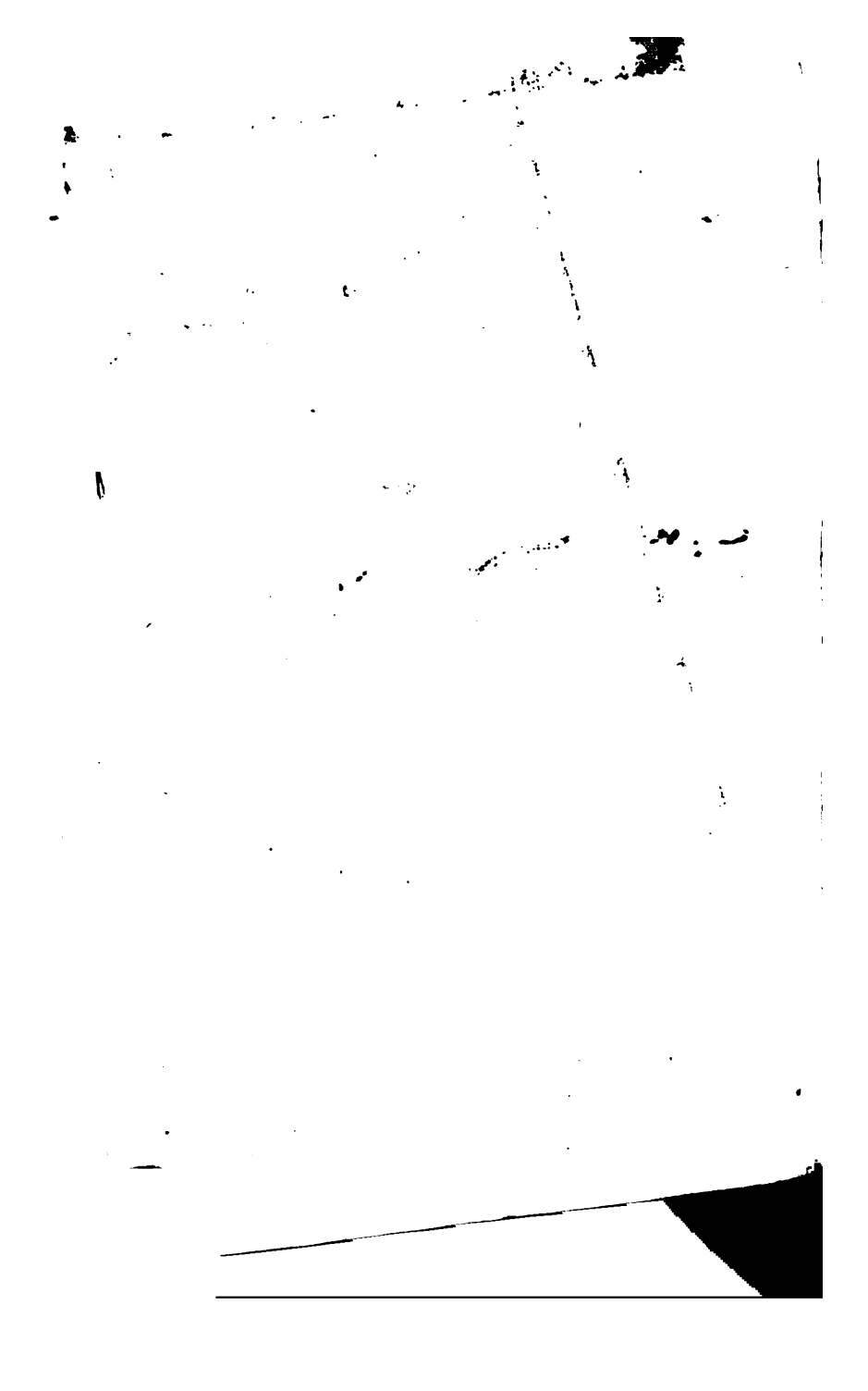

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